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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

A CONSCIENTIOUS CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF INTEREST

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THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

Aren't We All?—Claudette Colbert, Rex Harrison, Leslie O'Hara, Jeremy Brett, and George Rose in a revival of Frederick Lonsdale's London drawing-room comedy of 1923. Delightful nonsense, not to be missed. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/13/85.) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Arms and the Man—A revival of the Shaw play, with Kevin Kline, Raul Julia, and Glenne Headley. John Malkovich is the director. Previews Wednesday, May 29. Opens officially on Thursday, May 30, at 7. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

As Is—This touching play by William M. Hoffman concerns a personable young homosexual who is afflicted with AIDS, and is also a documentary of sorts about his milieu in this city. The lively impressionistic performance was directed by Marshall W. Mason, and the acting by the large cast, several of whom appear in multiple roles, is just right. *With Jonathan Hogan and Jonathan Hadary.* (3/25/85) (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Big River—A musical version of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn." Twain's great novel has been respectfully dealt with in a book by William Hauptman, with music and lyrics by Roger Miller. Daniel H. Jenkins plays Huck, Ron Richardson plays Jim, and John Short plays Tom Sawyer. Heidi Landesman has provided an unusually evocative setting—somehow, she has managed to put the Mississippi River on a stage. (5/13/85) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Biloxi Blues—A comedy that verges on autohagiography, the hero being the author, Neil Simon, as a young Army draftee who, in 1943, is struggling to assume the mantle of writer. Matthew Broderick is the attractive star, and Barry Miller is superb as a young but already wizened Jewish intellectual. (4/8/85) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 757-8646. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Childhood—Glenn Close stars in Simone Benmussa's adaptation of Nathalie Sarraute's memoirs. Barbara Wright translated the play and Miss Benmussa is the director. Opens Wednesday, May 29, and will run through Sunday, June 30. (Samuel Beckett, 410 W. 42nd St. 594-2826. Opening-night curtain at 7:15; thereafter, Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:30, and Sundays at 3.)

Chopin in Space—A play by Phil Bosakowski. (Ark, 131 Spring St. 226-7682. Thursdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3. Closes Sunday, June 9.)

Doctor Faustus—Daniel Gerroll and Samuel Blackwell's adaptation of the Christopher Marlowe play, with Mr. Gerroll in the title role. (Susan Bloch, 307 W. 26th St. Wednesday through Saturday at 8. Matinée Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, June 2. For tickets, call 722-1200.)

Doubles—The scene is a locker room in a tennis club in Connecticut, where four men undress and dress and undress while they talk over their more or less miserable lives. This is a comedy. The author is David Wiltse, and the four men are played by Austin Pendleton, John Cullum, Ron Leibman, and Tony Roberts. (5/20/85) (Ritz, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Ensemble Studio Theatre—Three programs of one-act plays. The opening program, now concluded, is reviewed in this issue. . . . ¶ "The Road to the Graveyard," by Horton Foote; "Desperadoes," by Keith Reddin; "Aggressive Behavior," by Stuart Spencer; and "Between Cars," by Alan Zweibel: Wednesday and Thursday, May 29-30, at 7:30; Sunday, June 2, and Wednesday, June 5, at 7; Friday, June 7, at 7:30; and Saturday, June 8, at 7 and 10. . . . ¶ "North of Providence," by Edward Allan Baker; "The Semi-Formal," by Louise Jerauld; "Painting a Wall," by David Lan; and "The Happy Hour," by Shel Silverstein: Friday, May 31, at 7:30; Saturday, June 1, at 7 and 10; and Sunday, June 2, at 3 (previews); Monday, June 3, at 7:30 (opening); and Thursday, June 6, at 7:30. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-3405. Closes Monday, June 17.)

Equity Library Theatre—A revival of the 1973 musical **A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC** by Stephen Sondheim (music and lyrics) and Hugh Wheeler (book), suggested by Ingmar Bergman's film "Smiles of a Summer Night," is the last in this season's series of productions. (103rd St. and Riverside Dr. Nightly at 8. Matinées Saturday and Sunday at 2:30. Closes Sunday, June 2. For information about tickets, for which contributions are requested, call 663-2028.)

The Foreigner—A very funny play by (and with) Larry Shue, with good performances by every single member of the company, most notably by Kevin Geer as a lovable half-wit. Jerry Zaks was the admirable director. (11/19/84) (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St., near Astor Pl. 254-4370. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Grind—A vigorous but curiously sad musical about a burlesque house in Chicago during the depths of the Depression. Splendidly acted, under the direction of Harold Prince, by Ben Vereen, Leilani Jones, Timothy Nolen, and Stubby Kaye. The exceptionally vivid setting is by Clarke Dunham. The book is by Fay Kanin, the music by Larry Grossman, and the lyrics by Ellen Fitzhugh. (4/22/85) (Mark Hellinger, 237 W. 51st St. 757-7064. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Hannah Senesh—A monologue based on the diaries and poems of the Zionist heroine. Lori Wilner is the monologuist. Written and directed by David Schechter, with music by Steven Lutvak, Elizabeth Swados, and Mr. Schechter. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St.

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989-2020. Wednesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Wednesdays at 2:30, and Sundays at 2:30 and 5:30.)

Joe Egg—A superb performance of Peter Nichols' matchless bleak comedy. Jim Dale and Stockard Channing are the parents of the hopelessly brain-damaged child, and they are supported by John Tillinger, Margaret Hilton, Joanna Gleason, and Tenney Walsh. Arvin Brown was the director. (1/14/85) (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Juno's Swans—Betty Buckley, Daniel Hugh-Kelly, and Mary Kay Place in a comedy by E. Katherine Kerr. Directed by Marsha Mason. (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 944-9300. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2. Closes Sunday, June 9.)

The King and I—Yul Brynner making what is advertised as his farewell appearance in the musical that he has made his own for several decades. An excellent production in every respect and well worth seeing, for the first or fiftieth time. (1/14/85) (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Leader of the Pack—A mock-musical devoted to performing two dozen songs of the early sixties written by Ellie Greenwich, who turns up in person. (4/22/85) (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Lies and Legends: The Musical Stories of Harry Chapin—A musical entertainment using works by the late composer. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 473-7270. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Ma Rainey's Black Bottom—A rousing play from start to finish. The author is August Wilson, the director is Lloyd Richards, and the marvellous cast includes Charles S. Dutton and Theresa Merritt. Voted the best play of the year by the Drama Critics Circle. (10/22/84) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

The Marriage of Bette and Boo—Christopher Durang's very funny, mordant satire on a Catholic *mariage à la mode*, with the playwright himself as the luckless son of the couple under examination. The performance, under Jerry Zaks' direction, is absolutely first-rate. (5/27/85) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

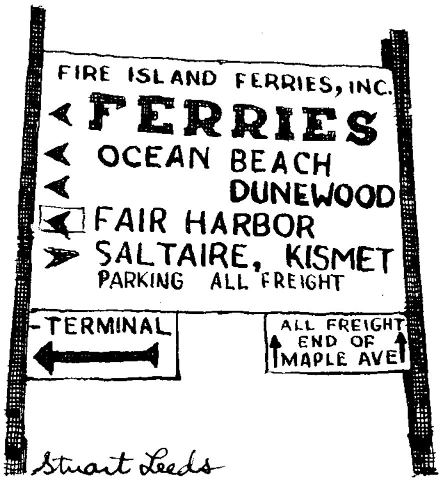
Mayor—A musical based on the best-seller of the same name by Edward I. Koch. With a score and lyrics by Charles Strouse and a book by Warren Leight. (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 982-9292. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Miss Universal Happiness—A play written and directed by Richard Foreman. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10.)

Negro Ensemble Company—The fourth in this season's series of productions is a revival of **ceremonies in dark old men,** by Lonne Elder III. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-8545. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 8:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 3 and Sundays at 2:30.)

The Normal Heart—An interminable, trashy non-play about AIDS, and its victims in the homosexual community of this city, who are compared to the Jews under the Nazis. The names Hitler, Roosevelt, Morgenthau, and, eventually, Mayor Koch are dropped with equal contempt. The evening is an insult to its audience and, what is far more serious, to the sufferers from this dreadful, seemingly hopeless disease. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

Orphans—A melodrama, by Lyle Kessler, about two young brothers—one a street thief and pickpocket, the other an apparent dimwit—and an older mobster who takes over their house and their lives. The first act works quite well, the second is merely serviceable, but what really counts is the performance under the dynamic direction of Gary Sinise. The actors are Kevin Anderson, Terry Kinney, and John Mahoney, and the show is an import from the Steppenwolf Company of Chicago. (5/20/85) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)



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Penn & Teller—A sublime combination of conjuring and comedy. Penn Jillette does the talking; Teller is silent. (5/6/85) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Wednesdays and Thursdays at 8; Fridays at 8 and 11; and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

Rat in the Skull—The scene is a police station in London, where an Irish Catholic terrorist is questioned by two English cops and questioned and tormented and smothered in words by a member of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. The play, by Ron Hutchinson, is an import from the Royal Court Theatre; it is very well acted, under the expert direction of Max Stafford-Clark. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

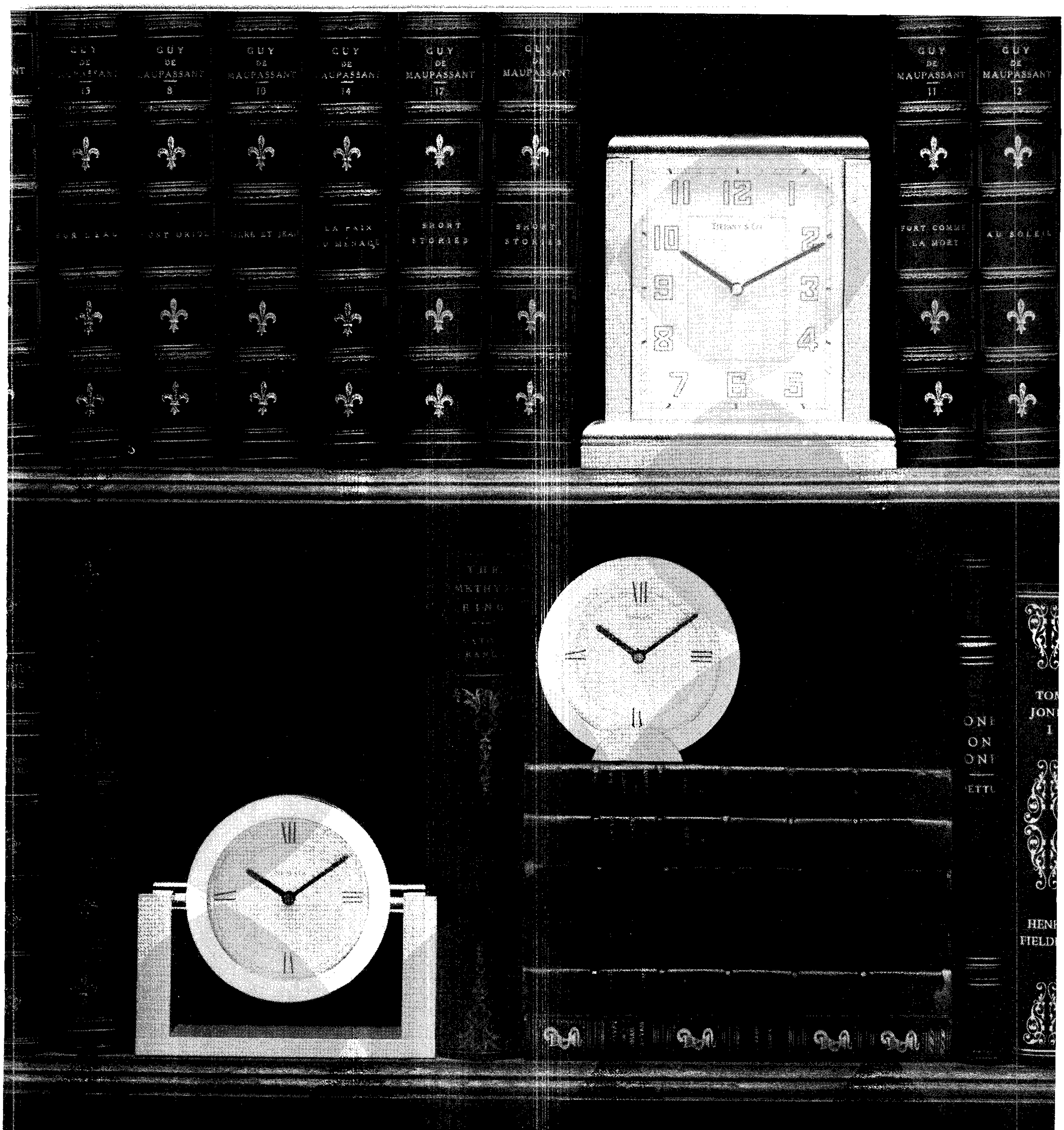
The Return of Herbert Bracewell—The admirable Milo O'Shea is lightly disguised as a failed actor in his eighties, who recites speeches and scenes from the parts he never got, in this monologue with interruptions, lightly disguised as a play. Frances Sternhagen, as the actor's wife, is the tactful interrupter. Geraldine Fitzgerald directed. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Chelsea Playhouse, 519 W. 23rd St. 243-0992. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Rommel's Garden—Lonny Price and Jay O. Sanders are the entire cast of a play by Harvey Gabor. (Harold Clurman, 412 W. 42nd St. 594-2370. Wednesday through Saturday at 8, and Sunday at 7. Matinées Saturday at 2:30 and Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, June 2.)

3 Guys Naked from the Waist Down—John Kassir, Scott Bakula, and Jerry Colker play three standup comedians who leave New York for Hollywood in this satiric and most original musical comedy. Mr. Colker wrote the book and lyrics, and Michael Rupert wrote the bountiful, engaging score. The effective scenery, costumes, and lighting were by Clarke Dunham, Tom McKinley, and Ken Billington. (2/18/85) (Minetta Lane, 18-22 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10:15; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Tracers—The eight good actors are Vietnam veterans, and the effective play is based on actual war experiences. It was conceived and directed by John DiFusco, and it is accompanied throughout by rock music. (2/4/85) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Sundays at 3.)

Long Runs—**brighton beach memoirs:** A remembrance of things past, by Neil Simon. The hero is a sex-obsessed fifteen-year-old. (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **la cage aux folles:** A dazzling production of a musical that has little wit and a lot of phony sentimentality about the tenderhearted family life of homosexuals. The music, by Jerry Herman, is Broadway-romantic. The two stars are Van Johnson and George Hearn. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 757-2626. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **cats:** Ezra Pound nicknamed T. S. Eliot "Old Possum," and under that name Eliot wrote a collection of poems about cats, and now the cats are on display on Broadway, with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, scenery by John Napier, and direction by Trevor Nunn. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **a chorus line:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **dreamgirls:** The slickest possible production of a musical comedy whose book, music, and lyrics are almost totally lacking in character. If Michael Bennett, the director, had been a Union general, the Civil War would have lasted about twenty minutes. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **the fantasticks:** 10,440 performances so far. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **fool for love:** Sam Shepard's play—mysterious, funny, and beautiful—is about two battling, loving lovers in a motel room at the edge of the Mojave Desert and about many other matters as well. Deborah Strang and George Gerdes have the leading roles. Mr. Shepard directed. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturday, June 1, at 6 and 8:30; Sunday, June 2, at 7; and Saturday, June 8, at 7:30 and 10. Matinées Sunday, June 2, and Thursday, June 6, at 3.) . . . **42nd street:** Once upon a time there was a silly-wonderful Warner Brothers musical about a young hoofer who goes on in place of a disabled star and herself becomes a star overnight. The legitimate musical that has been fashioned from the movie musical is just as silly but by no means as wonderful. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **hurlyburly:** David Rabe's wry, brilliant comedy about la vie de bohème in Hollywood is very well performed under Mike Nichols' direction. With Frank Langella, Ron Silver, Christine Baranski, Susan Anton, Danny Aiello, and Jerry Stiller. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **isn't it romantic:** A spirited production of Wendy Wasserstein's sometimes painful but always witty comedy about a pair of female "best friends" at age twenty-eight, and especially about the trials of one of them, Janie Blumberg. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **little shop of horrors:** Based on Roger Corman's 1960 horror quickie about a man-eating plant, this exuberant, jokey musical is wholly free of camp. The score is by Alan Menken, and Howard Ashman directed and wrote the book and lyrics. Martin P. Robinson designed the menacing plant. (Orpheum,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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Sundays at 2 and 5.) . . . **OH! CALCUTTA!:** A collection of short sketches that purport to give us a refreshing view of sex and do not. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 757-7164. Mondays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 9:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE:** Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine have invented a highly entertaining musical about Georges Seurat and his celebrated painting of the island of La Grande Jatte. Harry Groener is Seurat and Maryann Plunkett is Seurat's model and mistress. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **THE TAP DANCE KID:** An attractive cast does much to brighten what is otherwise a curiously gloomy musical about a black family making good. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 869-0550. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

MISCELLANY

THE CIRCUS—Final performances of Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey's annual wingding. (Madison Square Garden. 564-4400. Wednesday, May 29, and Friday, May 31, at 1:30 and 7:30; Thursday, May 30, at 10:30 and 7:30; Saturday, June 1, at 10:30, 2:30, and 7:30; and Sunday, June 2, at 1 and 5:30.)

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1985—A musical satire of Shubert Alley denizens. The lyrics to the song parodies are by Gerard Alessandrini. (Palsson's Upstairs, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. Tuesdays through Thursdays at 8:30; Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 and 11:30; and Sundays at 8:30.)

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET—Tentative schedule—Wednesday evening, May 29: "La Valse," "Tzigane," "Seven by Five," and "Symphony in Three Movements." . . . ¶ Thursday evening, May 30: "Menuetto," "Eight Lines," "Poulenc Sonata," and "The Four Temperaments." . . . ¶ Friday evening, May 31: "Seven by Five," "Other Dances," "Valse Triste," "Eight More," and "The Four Seasons." . . . ¶ Saturday matinée, June 1: "Concerto Barocco," "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," "Other Dances," and "The Four Temperaments." . . . ¶ Saturday evening, June 1: "Menuetto," "Tzigane," "Poulenc Sonata," and "Cortège Hongrois." . . . ¶ Sunday matinée, June 2: "Swan Lake," "In the Night," and "The Four Seasons." . . . ¶ Sunday evening, June 2: "Menuetto," "Eight Lines," "Valse Triste," "Eight More," and "Symphony in Three Movements." . . . ¶ Tuesday evening, June 4: "Apollo," "Valse Triste," "Eight More," and "Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3." . . . ¶ Wednesday evening, June 5: Divertimento from "Le Baiser de la Fée," "Valse-Fantaisie," "In the Night," and "Stravinsky Violin Concerto." . . . ¶ Thursday evening, June 6: "Firebird" and an unnamed ballet (première). A benefit performance; for tickets, call 870-5676, Mondays through Fridays, between 10 and 5. . . . ¶ Friday evening, June 7: "The Four Temperaments," "The Cage," "Seven by Five," and "Symphony in Three Movements." . . . ¶ Saturday matinée, June 8: Divertimento from "Le Baiser de la Fée," "The Cage," "Valse-Fantaisie," and "Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3." . . . ¶ Saturday evening, June 8: Divertimento from "Le Baiser de la Fée," "Poulenc Sonata," and "The Four Seasons." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 1. Through Sunday, June 23.)

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AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE—Wednesday matinée and evening, May 29: "Cinderella." . . . ¶ Thursday and Friday evenings, May 30-31; Saturday matinée and evening, June 1; and Wednesday matinée and evening, June 5: "Coppélia." . . . ¶ Monday evening, June 3: "Donizetti Variations," "Dim Lustre," and "Bach Partita." . . . ¶ Tuesday evening, June 4: A benefit program in tribute to Cynthia Gregory. . . . ¶ Thursday and Friday evenings, June 6-7: "Don Quixote [Kitri's Wedding]." . . . ¶ Saturday matinée and evening, June 8: "Romeo and Juliet." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Evenings at 8. Matinées at 2. Through Saturday, June 15.)

RITHA DEVI—A program of new and classical dances of India. (Lillie Blake School Theatre, 45 E. 81st St. Saturdays, June 1 and 8, at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 988-7697.)

SAMUL-NORI—A program of traditional Korean folk drumming and dance. (Asia Society, 725 Park Ave., at 70th St. 288-6400, Ext. 286. Monday, June 3, and Wednesday, June 5, at 8.)

CHAMBER BALLET U.S.A.—Wednesday, June 5, at 7:30, and Friday and Saturday, June 7-8, at 8: "Stars and Stripes," "La Favorita" (New York première), "Between Spaces," and "Contredances." . . . ¶ Thursday, June 6, at 8; Saturday, June 8, at 2; and Sunday, June 9, at 5: "Libido," "Contredances," and two New York premières—"Rossini Sonatas" and "Tideline." (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.)

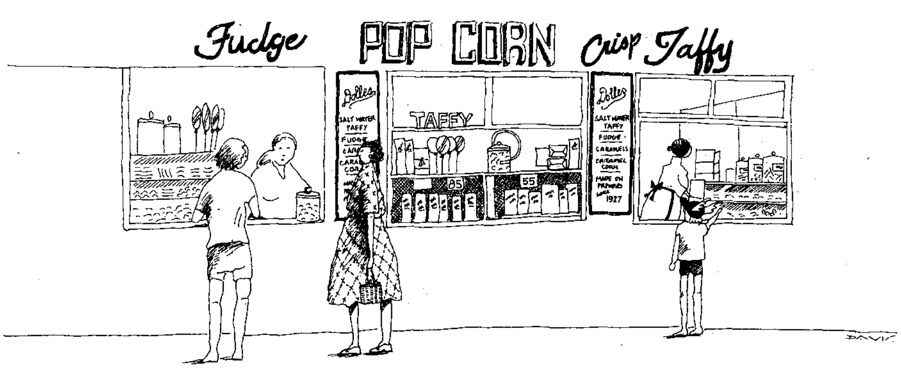
RIVERSIDE DANCE FESTIVAL—Performances by two companies. **NANETTE BEARDEN CONTEMPORARY DANCE THEATRE:** Wednesday, June 5; Friday, June 7; and Sunday, June 9, all at 8. . . . **BALLETFORE:** Thursday, June 6, at 8; Saturday, June 8, at 2 and 8; and Sunday, June 9, at 2. (*Theatre of the Riverside Church, Riverside* Dr. at 120th St. 864-2929.)

NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Tuesdays through Saturdays, **JULIE WILSON,** a wonderfully convincing singer, celebrates Cole Porter Month in the Oak Room. Shows start at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Pianist Buck Buchholz occupies the Rose Room Sundays from five-thirty to eleven. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—**BLOSSOM DEARIE** is here, singing in her small, uncomplicated, diction-perfect voice. Early-*evening concerts Wednesdays through Satur*days at six-thirty.



BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Bluesy tenor saxophonist **STANLEY TURRENTINE** leads his band through Monday, June 3, and on Tuesday, June 4, trumpeter **FREDDIE HUBBARD** will arrive in town. Music from nine. Trumpeter **TED CURSON** conducts after-hours (real late, after the last set) jam sessions every night but Monday. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—The oh-so-varied lineup: Thursday, May 30, John Hall and the **PERSUASIONS,** the sublime a-cappella-street-corner-soul quintet; Friday, May 31, the Chesterfield Kings; Saturday, June 1, comedienne Elayne Boosler; and Friday and Saturday, June 7-8, P.F. Sloan. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—The jazz, in the form of duos: hard-bop pianist **BARRY HARRIS** works with a bassist through Saturday, June 1, and pianist **BILL MAYS** and bassist **RON MC CLURE** will take charge beginning Monday, June 3. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—Tuesdays through Saturdays in the Café Carlyle, **BOBBY SHORT** pays exuberant homage to Porter, Coward, Rodgers & Hart, Gershwin, and Kern with aid from bassist **BEVERLY PEER** and drummer **ROBBIE SCOTT.** Shows at ten and midnight. **VINCE GIORDANO** & the Nighthawks play for dancing Sundays and Mondays from nine to one. Dining. . . . ¶ In the Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** reigns over the keyboard and sings a bit, too. Her sets get going at ten Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The Bowery Institute of Rock and Roll. Monday is showcase night. Music from long after nine-thirty.

EDDIE CONDON'S, 144 W. 54th St. (265-8277)—The surviving home on the block for traditional small-band jazz. Music nightly from eight-thirty. Dining.

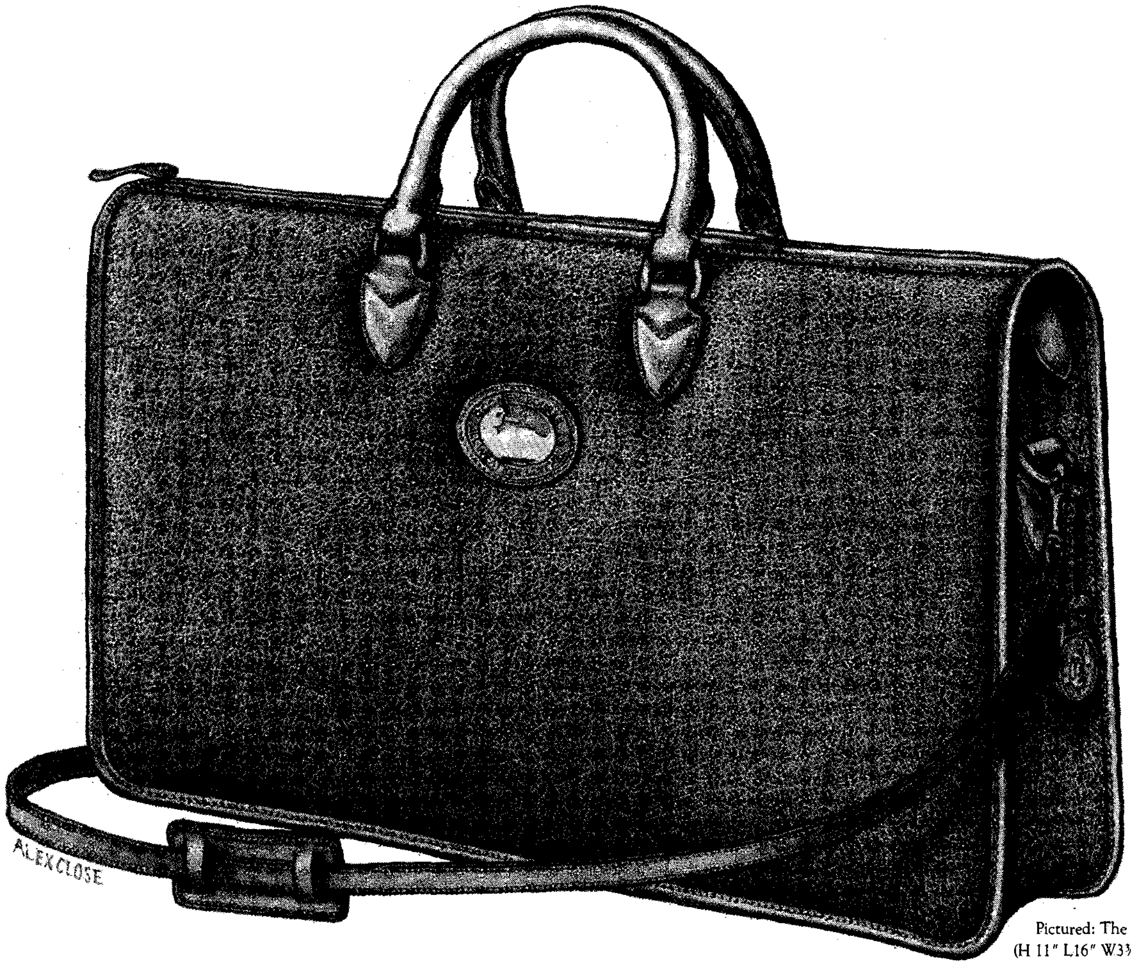
EDWARDIAN ROOM, in the Plaza Hotel, Fifth Ave. at 59th St. (759-3000)—Guitarist **BUCKY PIZZARELLI,** a beautiful, swinging player, guides a trio on Fridays and Saturdays from ten-thirty until one-thirty. Dining and dancing.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-*7902)*—***HERBIE MANN & THE FAMILY OF MANN*** *rule* the roost through Sunday, June 2, and on Tuesday, June 4, singer Carol Fredette will come in. Mondays are claimed by guitarist and inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb who was once known as Rhubarb Red. No doubt his garage and household effects and recording-studio implements will someday be found in the Smithsonian. Sets begin Sundays through Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at 8. Dining.

FOLK CITY, 130 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (254-8449)—Considerably more musical than Tie City or Food City. Wednesday, May 29, Salem 66 and Yo La Tango; Friday, May 31, the Ben Vaughn Combo and Last Roundup; Saturday, June 1, Charlie King and Judy Gorman-Jacobs; Thursday, June 6, Judy Small and Toshi Reagon; Friday, June 7, **CHRISTINE LAVIN** and Jody Guthrie; and Saturday, June 8, a trybute to the Byrds with Gene Clark, Michael Clarke, and later band members. Sundays are comedy nights. Shows are usually at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty.

GREGORY'S, 1149 First Ave., at 63rd St. (371-2220)—Guitarist **ATTILA ZOLLER** performs with pianist **DON FRIEDMAN** in a quartet through Sunday, June 2, and on Wednesday, June 5, Alicia Sherman will begin singing with the Peter Madsen duo. Mondays belong to singer and pianist **BROOKS KERR** and bassist John Belzaguy, and Tuesdays to guitarist **CHUCK WAYNE'S** trio. All these groups begin about ten. Sundays from five to ten, **BROOKS KERR** takes over.

HANRATTY'S, 1754 Second Ave., at 91st St. (289-3200)—A spiffy bar and back-room restaurant with a piano in it. Tuesdays through Sat-



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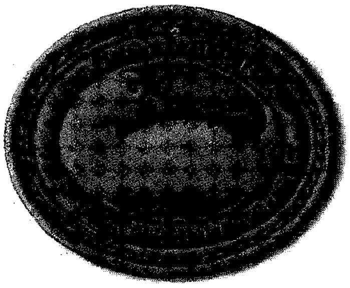

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urdays traditional-jazz pianist **RALPH SUTTON** goes to town, and starting Tuesday, June 4, he's joined by bassist **JACK LESBERG.** Sundays Keith MacDonald owns the keyboard, and on Mondays, you can hear **DICK HYMAN.** Music Sundays through Thursdays from eight-thirty, and Fridays and Saturdays from nine. Dining.

KNICKERBOCKER SALOON, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A pleasant corner restaurant and bar that is crowded with good listeners listening to good piano-bass teams. A *great* piano-bass duo, **CEDAR WALTON** and **RON CARTER,** winds up its stay on Saturday, June 1; starting Tuesday, June 4, **ROLAND HANNA,** who is sometimes undulating and romantic, at other times clipped and percussive, but always a powerhouse of a pianist, will take charge. Music from nine-thirty. Dining.

LONE STAR CAFÉ, 61 Fifth Ave., at 13th St. (242-1664)—Folk, rock, country, blues, regional food (chili and guacamole), and regional dress (Bermuda shorts). The lineup: Wednesday through Friday, May 29-31, Soul Bro. No. 1 **JAMES BROWN;** Monday, June 3, another trybute to the Byrds and a tribute to The Band, with **RICK DANKO** and **RICHARD MANUEL** (who were two-fifths of the latter); Tuesday and Wednesday, June 4-5, Don McLean; Thursday, June 6, Double Duo; and Friday, June 7, La Bamba & the Hubcaps. Dining.

LUSH LIFE, 184 Thompson St., at Bleecker St. (228-3788)—Guitarists **BARNEY KESSEL** and **HERB ELLIS** play moving duets through Sunday, June 2, and on Tuesday, June 4, pianist **MC COY TYNER** will come in with bassist **RON CARTER.** Sets begin at eight-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and at nine on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—**MILT HINTON'S** Seventy-fifth Birthday Party is underway here, with Mr. Hinton himself on bass, **BOBBY ROSENGARDEN** on drums, and a whole gang of visiting players appearing at various times. Music Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. On Monday nights from nine-thirty to midnight, Woody Allen usually drops by to play clarinet. Dining. Closed Sundays.

MIKELL'S, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—The music scene here is cooler than a Columbus Avenue gelato and the music hotter than a Columbus Avenue taco. The lineup: Wednesday, May 29, Detour; Thursday, May 30, percussionist **DANIEL PONCÉ;** Friday and Saturday, May 31-June 1, violinist Noel Pointer; Monday, June 3, R. & B.-ists **JUMP STREET;** Tuesday, June 4, Walter Duda; Wednesday, June 5, the Williamsburg All-Stars; and Thursday, June 6, singer **GRACE TESTANI.** Music from about ten until two.

RAINBOW ROOM, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (757-9090)—**PANAMA FRANCIS & THE SAVOY SULTANS** swing it Tuesdays through Thursdays from seven to one; Fridays and Saturdays from eight to two; and Sundays from six to midnight. Dining and dancing.

RITZ, 119 E. 11th St. (254-2800)—Rock from the eighties in a half-century-old ballroom: Wednesday, May 29, East Side Saga; Thursday, May 30, the **RAMONES;** Saturday, June 1, Lords of the New Church and Crossfire Choir; Wednesday, June 5, Mountain; Thursday, June 6, **CHUCK BERRY;** and Friday, June 7, Sisters of Mercy. Shows tend to begin sometime after eleven. Dancing.

ST. REGIS-SHERATON, Fifth Ave. at 55th St. (753-4500)—Composer and pianist **JOE BUSHKIN,** who wrote "Oh! Look at Me Now," can be looked at and listened to in the King Cole Room. Shows Mondays through Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven. Dining.

SEVENTH AVENUE SOUTH, 21 Seventh Ave. S., at Leroy St. (242-4694)—Jazz and fusion: Wednesday, May 29, violinist **BERNIE CHARLES;** Thursday, May 30, singer Connie James; Friday and Saturday, May 31-June 1, **WHO IT IS,** a bunch of rhythm-and-blues guys headed by guitarist **CORNELL DUPREE** and pianist **RICHARD TEE;** Sunday, June 2, Bill Washer; Tuesday, June 4, Marc Wagnon; Wednesday, June 5, Lou Caimano; Thursday, June 6, Michael Dolan; and Friday and Saturday, June 7-8, **BOB MINTZER'S** Big Band. Music from nine-thirty.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great place to listen to Brazilian, Caribbean, and African music—Brazilian-jazz groups, samba bands, and all-percussion ensembles that perform *carnaval* and generally wildly rhythmic music—and it tends to be swirling, heady, wonderful stuff. On its busy weekends, the club feels like the rush hour in Rio. Wednesday and Thursday, May 29-30, salsa singer and lyricist **RUBEN BLADES;** Friday, May 31, **MIKATA;** Saturday, June 1, **LOREMIL MACHADO & THE SARAVA BAHIA BAND;** Sunday, June 2, **KENIA;** Wednesday and Thursday, June 5-6, calypsonian **MIGHTY SPARROW;** Friday, June 7, the **AFRICAN CONNECTION;** and Saturday, June 8, **PÉ-DE-BOI.** Music from ten. Dining. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—**CRAIG HARRIS,** a stirring, sometimes outrageous, funny, growling trombonist and didgeridoo soloist, works with trumpeter **OLU DARA,** drummer **BILLY HIGGINS,** percussionist **DON MOYE,** bassist **ANTHONY COX,** and other free-flowing folks through Sunday, June 2. On Tuesday, June 4, trumpeter and occasional singer **DOC CHEATHAM** will move in for the night shift. Mondays are **GIL EVANS** nights: when his experienced but unjaded **BIG BAND,** with its unmistakable Evansian blur of instruments, plays Charlie Parker tunes on top of a heavy rock beat, it sounds like bebop march music. Shows from about ten. Dining.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—Mondays after nine are salsa nights in the barnlike downstairs room. On June 3, **WILLIE COLON, LUIS (PERICO) ORTIZ,** and saxophonist **CHICO FREEMAN,** the guest jazz soloist, will all be here. . . . ¶ Meanwhile, out on the Terrace, Wendy Simon and Eric Spiegel provide piano-bass duets through Sunday, June 2. And, in addition, jazz harpist **DAPHNE HELLMAN** plays Tuesdays with her combo. Sets begin at nine-thirty.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—People from all over the world are attracted to this famous, unpretentious basement establishment, fifty years old this year. **TOMMY FLANAGAN, GEORGE MRAZ,** and **ART TAYLOR** play jazz trio through Sunday, June 2, and on Tuesday, June 4, saxophonist and composer **DAVID MURRAY** will bring in a quartet made up of pianist **JOHN HICKS,** drummer **ED BLACKWELL,** and bassist **REGGIE WORKMAN.** Monday night's tradition is the **MEL LEWIS BIG BAND.** Music after ten.

WEST END, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—Past the steam tables of piping-hot student food (Columbia University is just across Broadway), beyond the pinball machines is a room full of live jazz. **NORRIS TURNEY'S** *Ellingtonian outfit, the* **DUKE'S MEN,** *is* here through Sunday, June 2; on Monday, June 3, drummer **WALTER BOLDEN,** pianist **HAROLD MABERN,** and bassist **MAJOR HOLLEY** will drop in; and on Tuesday, June 4, saxophonist **GEORGE KELLY** will bring in his Jazz Sultans. Music from about nine.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A spacious, airy bar connected to a spacious, airy dining room by a spacious, airy passageway with tables and chairs and pianists or guitarists and bassists in it. The music schedule: pianist **BEN ARONOV** and bassist **JAY LEONHART** through Saturday, June 1; bassist **STAFFORD JAMES** and pianist Mark Cohen starting Tuesday, June 4; guitarist **GENE BERTONCINI** and bassist **MICHAEL MOORE** on Sundays; and pianist Jim Roberts and Brian Torff every Monday. Music weeknights from eight and Sundays from seven.

JAZZ / FOLK / ROCK CONCERTS, PERSONAL APPEARANCES, ETC.

GILBERTO GIL—Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Wednesday, May 29, at 8.

ANDREAS VOLLENWEIDER—Carnegie Hall. Thursday, May 30, at 8.

GEORGE BENSON and **ROBERTA FLACK**—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 246-4600. Thursday through Saturday, May 30-June 1, at 8.

MARIAN MCPARTLAND TRIO—With the New Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra. (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. Friday, May 31, at 8.)

WORLD CHAMBER ENSEMBLE & BRIAN SMITH QUARTET—Alternative Museum, 17 White St., three blocks south of Canal St., at Sixth Ave. 966-4444. Friday, May 31, at 8.

ARMEN DONELIAN—Jazz Center of New York, 380 Lafayette St. 505-5660. Friday, May 31, at 8:30.

BOB TELSON and **SAM BUTLER**—With the Colonus Messengers. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Friday and Saturday, May 31-June 1, at 11.)

ROGER WHITTAKER—Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Saturday, June 1, at 8.

JOSEPH JARMAN—Carnegie Recital Hall. 247-7800. Saturday, June 1, at 8:30.

GLORIA DENARD QUINTET—Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. Sunday, June 2, at 2:30. For information about tickets, call 722-8223.

BOB ROMAN–STEPHEN CALIA DUO—St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Sunday, June 2, at 7. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert.

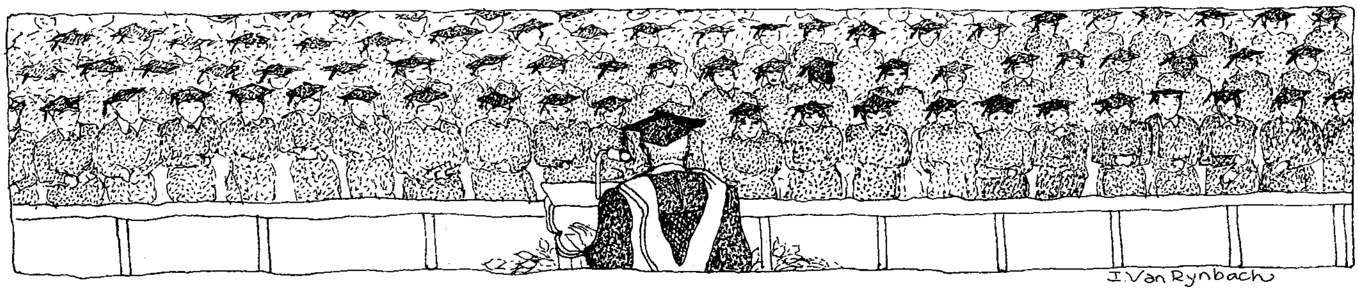
CHARLES AZNAVOUR—Carnegie Hall. Wednesday through Sunday, June 5-9, at 8.

MITCHELL KORN—With the Mitchell Korn Ensemble. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Friday, June 7, at 8.)

STEELEYE SPAN, RENAISSANCE, and **FAIRPORT CONVENTION**—Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 787-1477. Friday, June 7, at 8.

AMERICAN FOLK ROOTS—The last in a series of concerts, this one performed by David Amram and friends. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Saturday, June 8, at 8:30. . . . ¶ Alternative Museum. Sunday, June 9, at 8.)

BENEFIT CONCERTS—Two programs in tribute to the fifteenth season of the 92nd Street Y's Lyrics and Lyricists series, for the benefit of the Y School of Music. Saturday, June 1, at 8: Jerry Herman, Burton Lane, Charles Strouse, Larry Kert, Julie Wilson, and Mike Renzi. . . . ¶ Sunday, June 2, at 2:30: Sammy Cahn,



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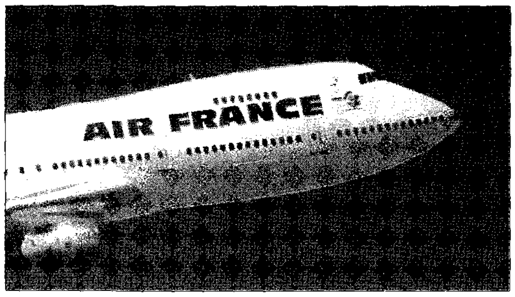

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Sheldon Harnick, Burton Lane, and Jerry Herman. (Kaufmann Concert Hall, 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410.)

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Bill Barrett—Abstract sculptures in bronze and aluminum. Through Saturday, June 1. (Kouros, 831 Madison Ave., at 69th St.)

William Crozier—Bronze figures, some of them in sexually explicit attitudes. Through Saturday, June 8. (Fourcade, 36 E. 75th St.)

Johannes Dörflinger—Startlingly warm colors (red, orange, magenta) are dominant in these paintings of trees, figures, and a landscape, stylized almost to the point of abstraction. Through June 14. (Cordier & Ekstrom, 417 E. 75th St.)

Russell Forester / Chester Kasnowski—Boxlike Formica sculptures illuminated with neon lights and blinking diodes. / Collages of paper, pen-and-ink, and acrylic on unprimed canvas. Through Saturday, June 1. (Urdang, 23 E. 74th St.)

Klaus Fussmann—Still-lifes and landscapes done in various mediums, the landscapes usually interrupted by a framed mirror containing a distorted self-portrait. Through Saturday, June 1. (Lefebre, 47 E. 77th St.)

Simon Harling / Sally Amster—Landscapes, mostly large scale, of the British Isles. / Expressionistic landscapes. Through Saturday, June 1. (Sachs, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Jean Hélion—The artist's shift from abstraction to figuration is documented in these paintings and works on paper completed between 1934 and 1948. Through Saturday, June 1. (Rachel Adler, 58 E. 79th St.)

Will Horwitt (1934-85)—Four large loop-shaped steel sculptures that were cut with an industrial laser by the artist, who died last month. Through Friday, May 31. (Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St.)

Michael Tetherow—Large, richly colored paintings in which figures are insinuated rather than defined. Through Saturday, June 1. (McCoy, 19 E. 71st St.)

Joan Thorne—Recent abstract paintings, some incorporating more than twenty colors, plus pastels on paper. Through June 21. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. Open Mondays; closed Saturday, June 8.)

Group Shows—At the **CDS GALLERY,** 13 E. 75th St.: Paintings, sculptures, and works on paper by twentieth-century Latin-American artists, including Fernando Botero, R. Lopez Dirube, Amelia Pelaez, and Claudio Bravo. Through June 29. (Open Mondays.) . . . **DAVIS & LANGDALE,** 746 Madison Ave., at 65th St.: Watercolors and drawings by eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century British artists, including Constable, Blake, and Whistler. Through Friday, May 31. . . . **FORUM,** 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.: Paintings in oil and watercolor by American artists from the thirties and forties, including Milton Avery and Max Weber; an exhibit meant to go hand in hand with one at the Saidenberg Gallery, listed below. Through Friday, May 31. . . . **HOFFELD,** 1020 Madison Ave., at 79th St.: Paintings, primarily, by second-generation women surrealists, including Dorothea Tanning, Kay Sage, and Leonora Carrington. Through Saturday, June 8. (Open Mondays.) . . . **MAZOH,** 13 E. 76th St.: Matisse, Picasso, de Kooning, and Gorky are among the fourteen twentieth-century artists represented by paintings and drawings. Through Saturday, June 1. . . . **SAIDENBERG,** 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.: Paintings by European artists from the thirties and forties, Klee, Léger, and Picasso among them. Through Saturday, June 1. (Opens at 1 on Saturdays.) . . . **SCHLESINGER-BOISANTÉ,** 822 Madison Ave., at 69th St.: Fifteen contemporary painters are represented by one work apiece, in mediums ranging from sandpaper to silk. Ross Bleckner, David Deutsch, and Andrea Belag are three. Through June 15.

Sculpture—Bronzes by Maillol, mobiles by Calder, and assorted pieces by Archipenko are complemented with paintings and works on paper by the artists. Through Friday, May 31. (Perls, 1016 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Lothar Baumgarten—Photographs of a Venezuelan jungle where this German conceptual artist lived among nomadic Indians and found, among other things, that man's quest for uranium, tin, gold, and the rest of it is displacing the tapirs, jaguars, armadillos, crocodiles, and even the ants, who belong there. Through June 15. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

James Bohary—Abstract paintings (large and small) in oil, plus charcoal drawings. Through June 18. (Prats, 24 W. 57th St.)

Alexander Calder (1898-1976)—A happy assembly of some of his best works—stabiles, mobiles, paintings—shown to their best advantage. Through June 15. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Chuck Dugan / James Surls—Large, colorful abstractions. / Large sculptures of imaginary beasts contrived from tree branches. Through Saturday, June 1. (Frumkin, 50 W. 57th St. Opens at noon on Saturdays.)

Karen Erla—Collages incorporating etched material, fabrics, wire screening, and other elements in fanciful abstractions. Through Saturday, June 8. (Phoenix, 30 W. 57th St.)

R. M. Fischer—Stylized metal lamp-sculptures. Through Saturday, June 1. (Baskerville+Watson, 24 W. 57th St.)

Sidney Goodman—Realist works on paper; one, in pastel and charcoal, shows two women lugging an unconscious man. Through June 14. (Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St.)

Alexandre Hogue—Landscapes of Big Bend National Park, Texas. Through June 15. (French, 41 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Bryan Hunt—Recent sculptures done in plaster, carved wood, and steel. Through Saturday, June 8. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Lester Johnson—The Gold Series: The artist's familiar figures (strollers, bathers) in action on canvases suffused with warm gold tones. Through Friday, June 7. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Harry Koursaros—Recent paintings and works on paper, full of mythological motifs. Through Saturday, June 1. (Haber Theodore, 24 W. 57th St.)

Hitch Lyman / Gary Kulak—A new set of small watercolors of Greece, Turkey, and Italy. / Bronze and steel sculptures of benches and chairs. Through June 14. (Kornblee, 20 W. 57th St.)

Fred Meyer—Terra-cotta and bronze sculptures, and gouaches, of figures reminiscent of the twenties. Through Saturday, June 1. (Midtown, 11 E. 57th St.)

I. Rice Pereira (1907-71)—Figurative drawings incorporating lines of poetry written by the artist. Through Saturday, June 8. (Zarre, 41 E. 57th St.)

Joel Perlman—Freestanding abstract welded-steel sculptures, some more than nine feet high. Through June 28. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Osvaldo Romberg—Abstract paintings dealing with outer space. Through Thursday, June 6. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

Judith Rothschild—Abstract relief paintings. Through Saturday, June 1. (Iolas-Jackson, 52 E. 57th St.)

T. L. Solien—Paintings, drawings, and prints. Through Saturday, June 1. (Getler-Pall-Saper, 50 W. 57th St.)

Richard Tuschman—Plaster-and-balsa wall sculptures shaped like conventional houses and containing small figures, some of which have been decapitated. Through Saturday, June 1. (Markel, 50 W. 57th St.)

Chihung Yang / Charles Munch—Paintings in which lusty female nudes are contrasted with skulls and bones. / Paintings of simplified human figures in a variety of situations—one man rescuing another from drowning, for instance. Through Saturday, June 8. (Siegel, 24 W. 57th St.)

Richard Ziegler—A pair of shows by a German Expressionist who, at ninety-four, is exhibiting here for the first time. Satirical paintings, drawings, and prints depicting bourgeois Berliners in the twenties. (Alex Rosenberg, 20 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.) . . . ¶ Landscapes, cityscapes, and portraits from the same period. (Goethe House, 1014 Fifth Ave., at 83rd St. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11 to 7; Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 5.) Both shows through June 22.

Group Shows—At the **ALEXANDER,** 20 W. 57th St.: Paintings and sculptures in diverse mediums by sixteen contemporary artists, including Jonathan Borofsky, Yvonne Jacquette, Jasper Johns, and Judy Rifka. Through June 29. . . . **ARMSTRONG,** 50 W. 57th St.: Paintings, sculptures, and works on paper by nine Irish artists who participated in last year's Dublin exhibit called "Rosc," which is a nice Gaelic word meaning "poetry of vision." Through Saturday, June 8. . . . **DAVID FINDLAY, JR.,** 41 E. 57th St.: A family affair, with works on paper by Tully Filmus and his sons Michael and Stephen. Through June 15. (Open Mondays.) . . . **JANIS,** 110 W. 57th St.: Eight young American artists are represented by paintings, collages, and sculptures. Through Friday, May 31.

GALLERIES—SoHo

Charles Arnoldi—Paintings that are the result of a process in which the artist wielded a chain saw on a surface of laminated plywood several inches thick, dousing it with paint in various colors as he went. The idea came from an aerial photograph of the Mount St. Helens eruption. Through Saturday, June 1. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

Elise Asher—*Fanciful* landscapes done in oil. Through Saturday, June 1. (Ingber, 460 West Broadway.)

Jay Coogan—Large abstract wood sculptures painted in bright greens, reds, and yellows, plus drawings. Through June 22. (Knowlton, 153 Mercer St.)

Dan Flavin / Dianne Blell—A large and otherwise empty gallery is transfigured by a double row of pink, yellow, blue, and green fluorescent tubes running along the top of one wall, like a frieze. Through Aug. 30. / Unusually large color photographs of robed figures (Cupid and Psyche, for instance) posed in classical settings. Through June 15. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

Gilbert and George—New hand-dyed photographic works in a show that complements their retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum. Through Saturday, June 1. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison / Edwin Schlossberg—Photographs and texts outlining the projects undertaken by these urban cosmographers toward rescuing rivers in San Jose and Pasadena, and softening the looks of Atlanta's fortresslike inner city. / A large room full of this poet's works lettered on aluminum-and-Scotchlite signs, fixed to the walls and posted on a forest of pillars; the title of the series is "Deep See Poems." Through June 15. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

David Kapp—Semi-abstract paintings of city

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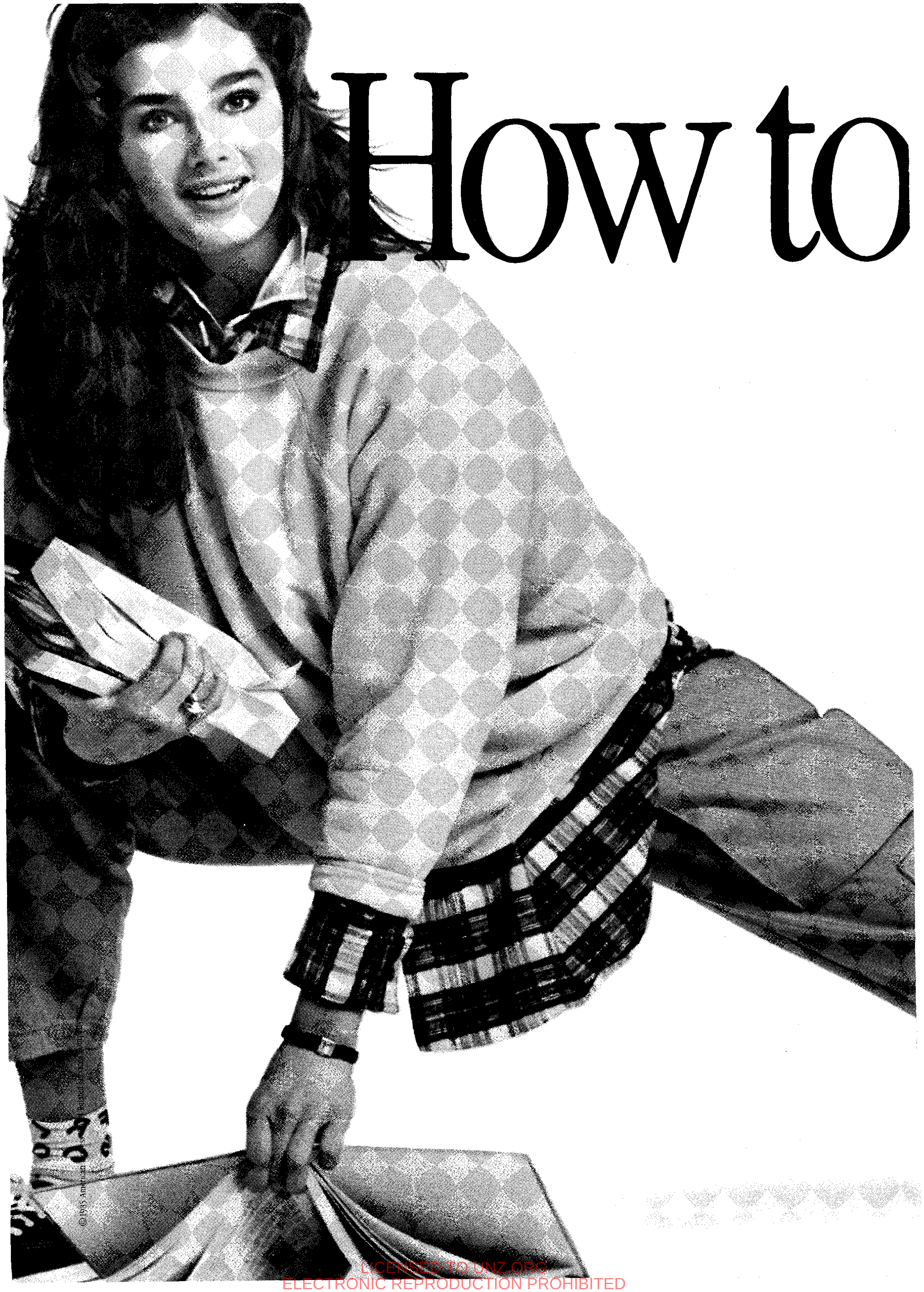

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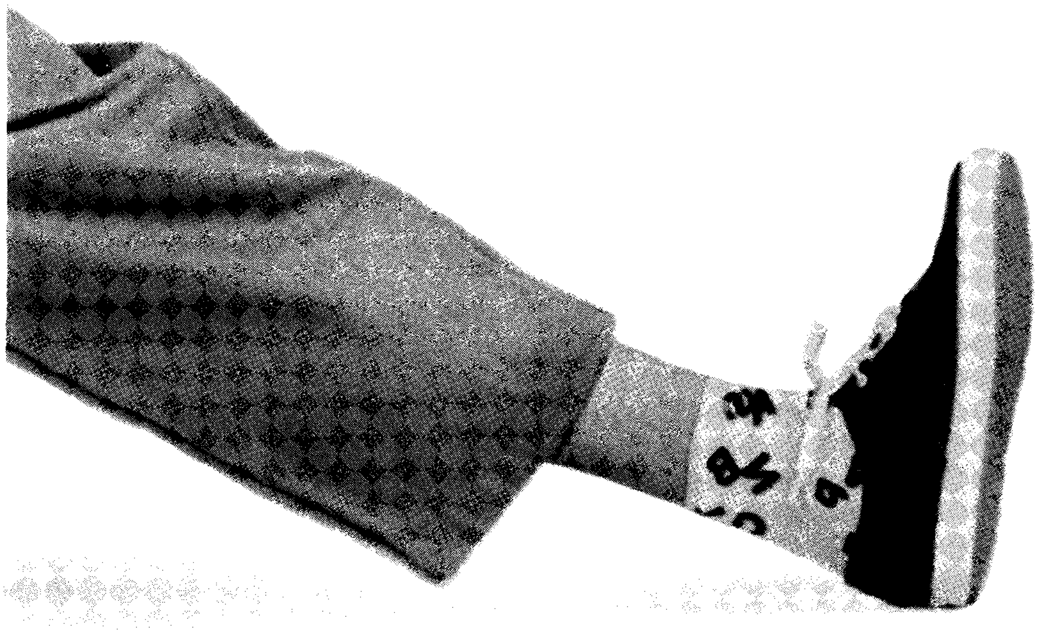

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

traffic. Through Saturday, June 1. (Manhattan Art, 81 Greene St.)

Sabina Mirri—Figurative pastel-and-watercolor drawings on paper applied to canvas. Through Wednesday, June 5. (Nosei, 100 Prince St.)

Mimmo Paladino—Sculptures in stone and bronze. Through Saturday, June 8. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

Alan Siegel—Wood chairs are the convention; the invention lies in their embellishment, such as the chair that has van Gogh's wicker painted on it in van Gogh colors. Through June 26. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Alan Singer / David Sipress—Abstract oil paintings and works on paper. / Wood constructions and drawings. Through Saturday, June 1. (55 Mercer Street Gallery.)

Dennis Smith (1951-83)—Large, visionary paintings, some of them doleful and some comic—Betty Boop's head on the body of Buddha, for instance. Through Friday, May 31. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

Bill Woodrow—Sculptures composed from salvage—for instance, an airplane composed, more or less, from a wrecked wing, with a shovel made from the same wreckage serving as one blade of a propeller. Through Saturday, June 8. (Gladstone, 152 Wooster St.)

Jack Youngerman—Large sculptures of cast fibre glass, with which the artist shows what can be accomplished by twisting a simple rectangle into a three-dimensional form. Through Friday, May 31. (Washburn, 113 Greene St.) . . . ¶ Related works on paper. (Washburn, 42 E. 57th St.)

Group Shows—At **THE DRAWING CENTER,** 137 Greene St.: Drawings on loan from the Museo Correr, in Venice, which represent work done in that city from the Renaissance through the nineteenth century. Through July 27. (Open Wednesday evenings until 8.) . . . **SOHO CENTER FOR VISUAL ARTISTS,** 114 Prince St.: Recent paintings by Eva Goetz, Amy Kool, Doris Lanier, and Betty Tompkins. Through June 15. (Opens at noon.) . . . **THORP,** 103 Prince St.: Recent paintings by Gregory Crane, R. L. Kaplan, and June Leaf. Through June 29.

Sculpture—At the **COOPER,** 155 Wooster St.: Geometric sculptures—rectangles or cubes by Sol LeWitt, Tony Smith, Robert Grosvenor, Donald Judd, Carl Andre, and Jackie Winsor, and a cone by Joel Shapiro. Through Saturday, June 1. . . . **ESMAN,** 70 Greene St.: Sol LeWitt showing aluminum pieces (large and small), Jene Highstein showing free-standing, globular plaster works, and George Creamer showing painted-wood wall constructions. Through Saturday, June 1.

OTHER GALLERIES

Daze—Large canvases of spray-painted graffiti, and smaller works of graffiti done in watercolor, a new medium for the artist. Through June 9. (Eastman-Wahmendorf, 216 E. 10th St. Opens daily, except Mondays, at 1.)

Judy Rifka / David West—Nudes and still-lifes painted directly on the Gracie Mansion Gallery walls; classical figures painted on irregularly stretched canvases. / Oil paintings of rudimentary figures. Through June 16. (Gracie Mansion Gallery, 167 Avenue A, at 10th St. Opens at 1 Wednesdays through Sundays.)

Diego Rivera (1886-1957)—Watercolors and drawings, mostly of Mexican subjects but a few done in Russia when the artist was a guest at the tenth anniversary of the revolution. Through June 28. (Martin, 213 E. 49th St. Open Mondays; closed Saturdays.)

Russell Sharon—Bright-colored "people and pets" of the artist's design—the former sculpted from tree trunks with a chain saw, the latter constructed with wood strips. Through June 28. (Bromm, 90 West Broadway, at Chambers St.)

Taro Suzuki—The artist pokes fun at the local science fair with a glass model of a solar system, drawings of planets, and an installation of light reflecting off plastic pieces. Through Saturday, June 1. (Newburg, 44 White St. Opens at 1 Wednesdays through Saturdays.)

P.S. 1—Paintings by forty-four artists from Houston and photographs by ten Swedes are just two of the many shows in progress here. Through June 23. (46-01 21st St., Long Island City. Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

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The Gathering of the Avant-Garde: The Lower East Side, 1948-1970—A three-part exhibit that recalls the days before art and money had found each other, when artists congregated in what was the low-rent section of the East Village. Paintings, drawings, prints, and sculptures from that time, by Elaine de Kooning, Red Grooms, Robert Rauschenberg, Janet Fish, and others. (Kenkeleba Gallery, 214 E. 2nd St. Thursdays through Sundays, 1 to 6. Through June 30. . . . ¶ Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. Mondays through Saturdays, noon to 6. Through June 29.) . . . ¶ Documentary material from the period, primarily photographs but also literary journals and show announcements, are at St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Through June 30. (Thursdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

The Razor Show—A two-gallery exhibit of paintings, sculptures, drawings, photographs, and video honoring the old Razor Gallery, one of the first to open in SoHo (it closed in 1979). Thirty-four alumni, including Coco, Judy Pfaff, Helmut Amann, Franc Palaia, and Robert Colescott, are represented by one work from the Razor era and one current piece. Through June 29. (Baum, 109 Hudson St. . . . ¶ Hudson Center, 105 Hudson St. Opens at noon.)

Group Shows—At the **ALTERNATIVE MUSEUM,** 17 White St.: The second half of a two-part survey of paintings and sculptures by artists from the Southeast. Through Saturday, June 8. (Closed Tuesdays.) . . . **POSTMASTERS,** 66 Avenue A, near 4th St.: An abstract painting in vivid colors by Peter Halley and a wall sculpture involving Plexiglas and store-bought hardware by Alan Belcher, among other works. Through Sunday, June 2. (Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

Note—At Art Galaxy, 262 Mott St., just south of Houston St.: A hooded embrasure, accessible twenty-four hours a day from the street outside the gallery, looks in on a small-scale mountainous landscape with a waterfall and a glowing volcano. Rainstorms occur regularly, lightning flashes, and a river races along at flood tide. The installation is the work of Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel. Through July 31. (Closed Tuesdays.)

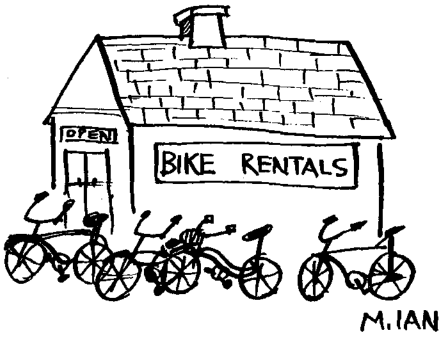
PHOTOGRAPHY

Tina Barney—Large-scale photographs showing family and friends on their home ground. Through Friday, May 31. (Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St.)

Harry Callahan / Carl Toth—Multiple-exposure dye-transfer prints of downtown urban shopping areas. / Abstract color-Xerox collages. Through June 15. (Pace-MacGill, 11 E. 57th St.)

Barbara Ess—Large pinhole-camera photographs—of beaches, birds, interiors—veiled by the murkiness inherent in lensless-camera works. Through Saturday, June 8. (Cable, 611 Broadway.)

Larry Fink / Anthony Hernandez—Photographs juxtaposing social gatherings in high-society Manhattan and in Martin's Creek, Pennsylvania. / Another juxtaposition, here contained in each photograph of tourists and locals on Rodeo Drive. Through June 15. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. Opens at 1.)



André Kertész—Vintage and modern prints of public gardens in Budapest, Paris, and New York. Through June 29. (Harder, 37 W. 57th St. Closed Tuesdays.)

Russell Lee—Documentary photographs of New York in the Depression, plus more uplifting F.S.A. prints. Through Friday, May 31. (Ledel, 168 Mercer St. Opens at noon.)

Tod Papageorge—Silver prints of visitors to Central Park and the Acropolis. Through Saturday, June 1. (Wolf, 30 W. 57th St.)

Milton Rogovin—Photographs, including a series on Buffalo steel-mill and automotive workers on the job and at home, will be mounted by the Brooklyn Museum. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

Sam Wagstaff Collection—Mr. Wagstaff selected this show of nineteenth- and twentieth-century photographs that were in his collection before it was bought by the J. Paul Getty Museum, and of a few photographs he recently acquired. Through June 9. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Group Shows—At the **MUSEUM OF MODERN ART,** 11 W. 53rd St.: Various prints, eighteen-forties to nineteen-thirties, from a private collection. For dates and times, see below under "Museums." . . . **PRAKAPAS,** 19 E. 71st St.: An exhibit of thirty-two prints underscoring the idea that the landscape compositions of early-to-mid-twentieth-century European photographers had more to do with art movements than with mountains. Through July 5. (Opens at noon; closed Saturdays.)

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

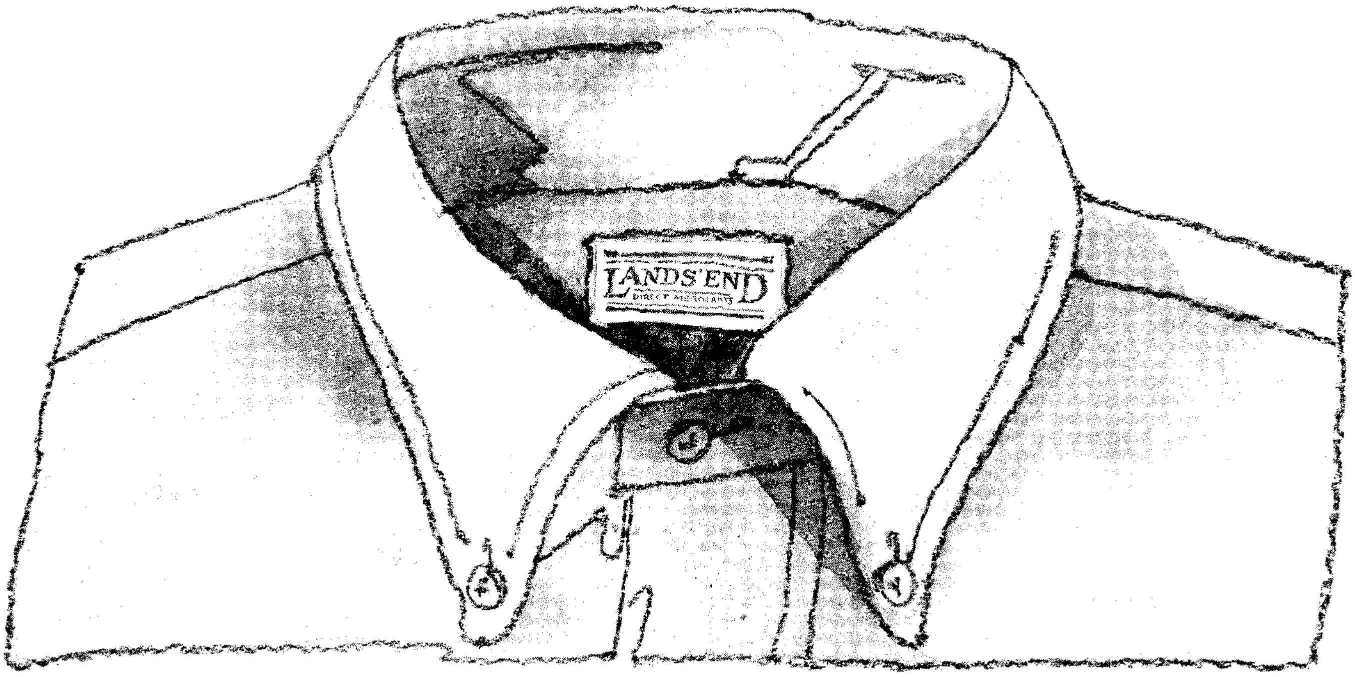
Note—Tuesday evening, June 4, is the date for the annual **MUSEUM MILE FESTIVAL,** when museums and galleries along upper Fifth Avenue—from Eighty-fourth Street to 105th this year—open their doors from six until nine (admission free, except for the Metropolitan Museum), while out on the Avenue musicians, dancers, and street performers hold court. No cars above Eighty-sixth Street that night.

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—From the museum's collection of seventy pianos, a kind of genealogical selection—the oldest existing piano (1720), built by the instrument's inventor, Cristofori, and about thirty of its progeny; audioguides are available on which visitors can hear them being played. . . . ¶ An exhibit of a hundred gold objects produced by the prodigious craftsmen of pre-Columbian cultures of the Americas. The pieces, among them pendants, masks, and cups, are from the collection of Jan Mitchell. Through Aug. 11. . . . ¶ A show of antiquities—crosses, chalices, crowns—from the Treasury of San Marco, Venice, many of which have resided there since their removal from Constantinople in the early thirteenth century. Through June 9. . . . ¶ A retrospective of landscape paintings by George Inness. Through June 9. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—Henri Rousseau's "Myself, Portrait-Landscape" greets viewers to a retrospective of approximately sixty of the artist's paintings. Through Tuesday, June 4. . . . **PHOTOGRAPHY:** The collection of Paul F. Walter. Through Aug. 13. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A Gilbert and George retrospective of large photographic murals, in which the artists themselves appear. Through June 16. A complementary show (ending Saturday, June 1) is at Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. . . . ¶ An exhibit of works on paper by Mark Rothko. Through June 16. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—The Whitney Biennial can be



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seen in its entirety through Sunday, June 2; after that, the lobby gallery and fourth-floor exhibits continue through June 9. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—A show of *drawings and paintings by nineteenth-century* American Pre-Raphaelites, who practiced the doctrines of John Ruskin and the English movement, and whose subjects were nature scenes and humble still-lifes. Also included are works by better-known contemporaneous artists outside of but affected by the movement—Bierstadt, Church, Durand, and others. Through June 10. . . . **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Prints by Milton Rogovin. Starts Thursday, May 30. (Open daily except Tuesdays. Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 6; and special hours Sunday, June 2, when, from 11:30 to 6, admission is free.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—The ancient Mayan civilization is recaptured and documented in an exhibit of objects (in gold, wood, jade, and shell), plus maps and photographic blowups. *Through July 28. (Open daily. Hours: Mon*days, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, Broadway at 155th St.—A show of literary and music manuscripts and of paintings and sculptures by recipients of Academy-Institute awards and by newly elected members, among them Robert Penn Warren, Elizabeth Spencer, Carolyn Kizer, George W. S. Trow, Charles Wuorinen, Esteban Vicente, and George Sugarman. Through June 9. (Open daily, except Mondays, 1 to 4.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—A retrospective of Chicago furniture: An 1873 dressing table by W. W. Strong for the bridal suite of the Palmer House; a 1927 skyscraper-style armchair by Abel Fraidy; a 1983 green lacquer vanity by Cal Spritzer. Through Aug. 25. . . . ¶ A display of books and manuals on design themes which are admired for their bindings or for their texts, the requisite "Practical Ostrich Feather Dyer" (1886) an example of the latter. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Japan House, 333 E. 47th St.—A show that reviews recent public buildings designed by Japanese architects Fumihiko Maki and Arata Isozaki, *outlining their projects from concep*tion to completion through models, drawings, blueprints, photographs, and slides. Among the structures presented are the National Museum of Modern Art in Kyoto (Maki) and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles (Isozaki). (A local design by Mr. Isozaki is the interior of the Palladium, the recently opened night club on Fourteenth Street.) Through June 30. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—A show of paintings and drawings by German artist Felix Nussbaum (1904-44), many from the period when he lived in hiding during the Second World War. The artist died at Auschwitz. Through Aug. 4. . . . ¶ A series of recent prints by Frank Stella, who based them on a series (also on exhibit) by El Lissitzky (1919), who based *his* prints on the children's Seder song *"Had Gadya." Through June* 9. (Open daily except Saturdays. Hours: Mondays through Thursdays, noon to 5, and Tuesday evenings until 8; Fridays, 11 to 3; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Museum of American Folk Art, 125 W. 55th St.—High points in Southern folk art have been gathered for a show of ninety pieces, including Moravian redware and a quilt in the Afro-American tradition from North Carolina; a 1743 sampler from South Carolina; and, from Mississippi, examples of a singular nineteenth-century art form combining silhouettes and watercolors and called Nita Yuma pasties (after a plantation of that name), by William Henry Brown. Through Aug. 25. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10:30 to 8, with no admission charge after 5:30; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10:30 to 5:30.)

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National Academy of Design, 1083 Fifth Ave., at 89th St.—A show of drawings by John Singer Sargent which provides a broad selection of his works on paper; on loan from the Corcoran Gallery of Art. Through June 23. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—The forms and the language of signs (as in road signs and logos) are reflected in paintings, photographs, video, and, well, signs of all kinds by nine artists—Al Souza, Jenny Holzer, John Knight, and Marian Galczenski among them. Through July 7. . . . ¶ A show of paintings and works on paper by Pierre Tal-Coat, a French abstractionist. Through June 30. (Open daily except Mondays and Tuesdays. Hours: Wednesdays, noon to 8; Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—Photographs that tell the long history of and relationship between architecture in New York and Chicago. Also, preliminary studies. From the archives of the society and from the Art Institute of Chicago. . . . ¶ The bicentennial of Audubon's birth is cause for celebration at the society, which owns and has mounted all four hundred and thirty-three remaining original watercolors for "Birds of America." (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 5; Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—A large show called "Images of a Turbulent Decade, 1963-1973," which presents works in diverse mediums, primarily by black but *also by anti-war and feminist artists, among* them Benny Andrews, Rudolf Baranik, Romare Bearden, David Hammons, Gordon Parks, Betye Saar, and May Stevens. Also, a number of documentary photographs of civil-rights leaders and marchers. Through June 30. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

ART AFTER DARK

(Performance, music, dance, video, film, and combinations thereof.)

Franklin Furnace, 112 Franklin St. 925-4671.—Hans-Jurg Gilgen (performance), Thursday, May 30, at 8:30.

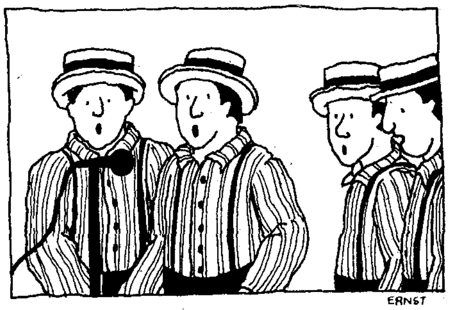
P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.—Charles Dennis (performance), Wednesday, May 29, at 9; Martha Bowers (dance), Friday through Sunday, May 31-June 2, at 9; Penny Arcade, a.k.a. Susana Ventura (performance), Friday through Sunday, June 7-9, at 9.

MUSIC

(The box-office number for Carnegie Hall is 247-7800, and for Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

Mary Findley—Violin. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Wednesday, May 29, at 8.)

Rita Bouboulidi—The last in a series of concerts presenting the Beethoven cycle of piano sonatas. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. Wednesday, May 29, at 8. For tickets, call 242-4770.)



Thouvenal String Quartet—Chamber music. (Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House. Wednesday, May 29, at 8.)

J. S. Bach: The Complete Organ Works—Two in a series of sixteen biweekly recitals, each performed by a different organist. (St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Thursday, May 30, at 8: Richard Bouchett. . . . ¶ Church of the Ascension, Fifth Ave. at 10th St. Sunday, June 2, at 3: Todd Wilson. Admission by contribution.)

Phoenix—A program of French baroque chamber music. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Thursday, May 30, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

I Cantori di New York—Bart Folse directing an a-cappella Bach-Schütz program, with Karen Grahn, soprano; Katie Geissinger, mezzo-soprano; Jeffrey Sweetland, tenor; and Phillip Sneed, bass. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. Friday, May 31, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Amato Opera Company—A *staged performance* of Massenet's "Thérèse," preceded by a concert of selections from other French operas. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Saturday, June 1, at 7:30.)

Florilegium Chamber Choir—JoAnn Rice directing a program of music by women composers. (Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church, 155 E. 22nd St. Sunday, June 2, at 3. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Seta Karakashian—Piano. (Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House. Monday, June 3, at 8.)

Dennis Koster—Classical and flamenco guitarist. (Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House. Tuesday, June 4, at 8.)

Manhattan Marimba Quartet—A program that includes the première of Steve Reich's "Violin Phase for Four Marimbas." (Carnegie Recital Hall. Tuesday, June 4, at 8.)

Peter Corey—Classical guitarist. (CAMI Hall, 165 W. 57th St. Wednesday, June 5, at 8. For tickets, call 757-3255.)

Benefit Concert—Leontyne Price, Simon Estes, and Wynton Marsalis will be among the participants in a concert for the benefit of African famine relief. (Carnegie Hall. Friday, May 31, at 8.)

SPORTS

Baseball—**YANKEES** at Yankee Stadium: Vs. California, Wednesday and Thursday, May 29-30, at 8. . . . ¶ Seattle, Friday and Saturday, May 31-June 1, at 8, and Sunday, June 2, at 2. . . . ¶ Oakland, Monday through Wednesday, June 3-5, at 8. . . . **METS** at Shea Stadium: Vs. St. Louis, Friday, June 7, at 8:05, and Saturday, June 8, at 1:35.

Bicycling—The finale of the *Self* Cycling Circuit, a twenty-five-mile race, will start at ten-thirty on Wednesday, May 29, in Central Park near the Tavern on the Green, and finish back at the same place.

Crew—Intercollegiate Rowing Association Regatta. (Onondaga Lake, Syracuse. Thursday through Saturday, May 30-June 1.) . . . ¶ Yale-Harvard Regatta. (New London. Saturday, June 8, starting at 10:30; varsity race at noon.)

Golf—Westchester Classic. (Westchester Country Club, Harrison. Thursday through Sunday, June 6-9.)

Racing—At **BELMONT:** Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1; through Monday, July 29. The Red Smith Handicap, Saturday, June 1; the New York Handicap, Sunday, June 2; the Nassau County Handicap, Friday, June 7; and the Belmont, Saturday, June 8. (Frequent trains leave Penn Station for the track Mondays and Wednesdays through Fridays between 10:53 and 12:59, and Saturdays and Sundays between 10:58 and 1:04.) . . . **GARDEN STATE PARK,** Cherry Hill, N.J.: Weeknights at 8; through Saturday, June 15. . . . **MONMOUTH PARK,** Oceanport, N.J.: Weekdays at 1:30; through Saturday, Aug. 31.

Running—L'eggs Mini Marathon, of ten kilometres, with close to seven thousand participating, will start at ten-thirty on Saturday, June 1, in Central Park near the Tavern on the Green, and finish at almost the same place.

TROTTING—At YONKERS RACEWAY: Weeknights at 8; through Monday, June 17. . . . SARATOGA RACEWAY, Saratoga Springs: Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8; through Saturday, Nov. 23. . . . MEADOWLANDS: Weeknights at 8; through Saturday, Aug. 17.

ET ALIA

POETRY AND PROSE READINGS—Ai, William Heyen, Faye Kicknosway, Heather McHugh, Robert Morgan, Joyce Carol Oates, Robert Phillips, and William Pitt Root reading from their own poetry. (Manhattan Theatre Club, 321 E. 73rd St. 472-0600. Monday, June 3, at 7:30.) . . . ¶ Ann Beattie reading from her own prose. (Three Lives & Company, 154 W. 10th St. Thursday, June 6, at 8. No tickets necessary; seating on a first-come, first-served basis.)

AUCTIONS—At SOTHEBY'S, York Ave. at 72nd St. (Exhibition hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 9:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.) Thursday, May 30, at 10:15 and 2: American nineteenth- and twentieth-century paintings, drawings, and sculptures. . . . ¶ Friday, May 31, at 10:15 and 2: Pre-Columbian art. . . . ¶ Monday, June 3, at 10:15: Chinese paintings. Exhibition starts Friday, May 31. . . . ¶ Monday, June 3, at 2: Chinese sculptures. Exhibition starts Friday, May 31. . . . ¶ Tuesday, June 4, at 10:15: Chinese ceramics, from the J. M. Hu family collection. Exhibition starts Friday, May 31. . . . ¶ Tuesday, June 4, at 2, and Wednesday, June 5, at 10:15 and 2: Chinese ceramics and other works of art. Exhibition starts Friday, May 31. . . . ¶ Thursday, June 6, at 10:15: Old Master paintings. Exhibition starts Friday, May 31. . . . ¶ Thursday, June 6, at 2: Sporting paintings and prints. Exhibition starts Saturday, June 1. . . . CHRISTIE'S, Park Ave. at 59th St. (Exhibition hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.) Thursday, May 30, at 11: Latin-American paintings, drawings, and sculptures. . . . ¶ Friday, May 31, at 10 and 2: American paintings, drawings, and sculptures. . . . ¶ Friday, May 31, at 2: The Rabiah Collection of American paintings.

WASHINGTON SQUARE OUTDOOR ART EXHIBIT—The semi-annual show will be on view Saturday and Sunday, June 1-2, and Saturday and Sunday, June 8-9, from noon until sundown.

COMING EVENTS

(A calendar for readers who plan a month or so ahead.)

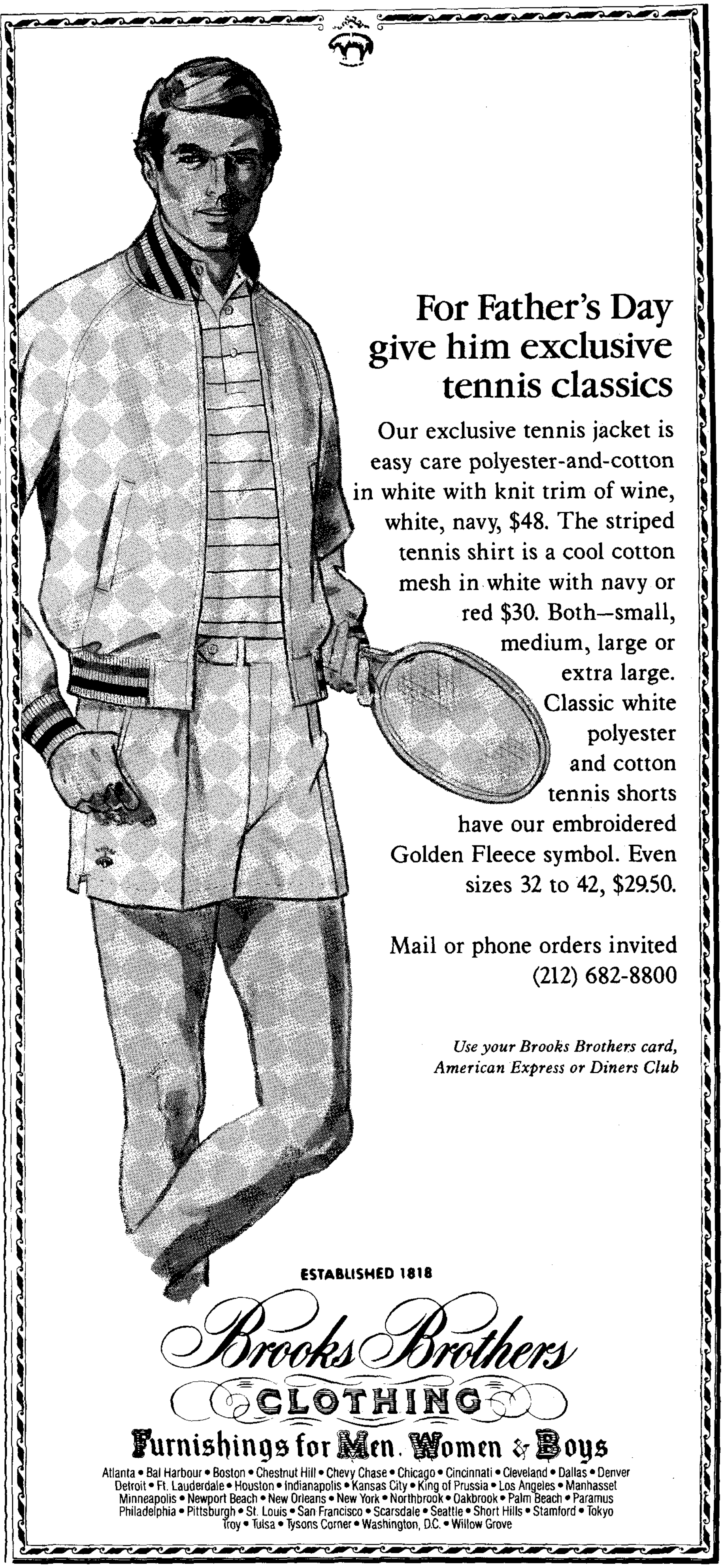
AUTOMOBILE RACING—At the Meadowlands: United States Grand Prix, June 30.

RACING—Atlantic City at Garden State Park, Cherry Hill, N.J.: June 17-July 25.

MUSIC—The Metropolitan Opera will present concert performances in Central Park on June 11 ("Manon Lescaut") and June 18 ("Rigoletto"). . . . ¶ Saratoga Performing Arts Center, June 14-Aug. 29. . . . ¶ Kool Jazz Festival (Avery Fisher Hall, Carnegie Hall, a Hudson River Day Liner, and Waterloo Village, Stanhope, N.J., among other places), June 21-30. . . . ¶ Goldman Memorial Band Concerts, in Damrosch Park, June 26-Aug. 4. . . . ¶ Tanglewood Festival, Lenox, Mass., June 27-Sept. 1. . . . ¶ Caramoor Festival, Katonah, N.Y., June 29-Aug. 25. . . . ¶ The New York City Opera will open at the New York State Theatre (870-5570) on July 5, with Sigmund Romberg's "The Student Prince," and will run through Nov. 17. . . . ¶ Mostly Mozart Festival, at Avery Fisher Hall (874-2424), July 8-Aug. 24.

THEATRE—Some productions scheduled to open during the next several weeks: A revised version of Neil Simon's comedy "The Odd Couple," starring Rita Moreno and Sally Struthers. . . . ¶ "Singin' in the Rain," a musical based on the 1952 film, with a book adapted by Betty Comden and Adolph Green from their original screenplay, and songs by Nacio Herb Brown and Arthur Freed.

OTHER DATES—Second-quarter Federal, New York State, and New York City income-tax payments are due Saturday, June 15, but you can squeeze by on Monday, June 17. . . . ¶ The first day of summer is June 21. . . . ¶ The Fourth of July falls on a Thursday.



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 24.

EAST SIDE

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171; theatre opens in the late afternoon and is closed Mondays.)
Through June 2: "Les Années 80" (1983; directed by Chantal Akerman).
From June 4: "Alphaville" (†).

R.K.O. Century Art, 36 E. 8th. (473-7014)
Through May 30: "Lost in America" (†).
From May 31: To be announced.

St. Marks Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 8th. (533-9292)
Through May 30: "Beverly Hills Cop" (†); and "Footloose" (1984; Herbert Ross), with Kevin Bacon and Lori Singer.
From May 31: To be announced.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Rambo: First Blood Part II" (George P. Cosmatos), with Sylvester Stallone and Richard Crenna.

Murray Hill, 160 E. 34th. (685-7652)
Through June 6: "The Purple Rose of Cairo" (†).
From June 7: "The Goonies" (Richard Donner).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Brewster's Millions" (Walter Hill), with Richard Pryor and John Candy.
Theatre 2: "Desperately Seeking Susan" (†).
Theatre 3: "A View to a Kill" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
Through June 6: "A Passage to India" (†).
From June 7: "Perfect" (James Bridges), with John Travolta and Jamie Lee Curtis.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Desperately Seeking Susan" (†).

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"Ladyhawke" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Beverly Hills Cop" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
Through May 30: "Secret Places" (Zelda Barron).
From May 31: "Sylvia" (Michael Firth; a New Zealand film).

Manhattan 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: Through June 6: "Lost in America" (†). From June 7: "The Goonies" (Richard Donner).
Theatre 2: Through June 6: "Code of Silence" (Andy Davis), with Chuck Norris. From June 7: "The Goonies" (Richard Donner).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: Through June 6: "Lily in Love" (Karoly Makk), with Christopher Plummer and Maggie Smith. From June 7: "Perfect" (James Bridges), with John Travolta and Jamie Lee Curtis.
Theatre 2: "Silver City" (Sophia Turkiewicz; an Australian film).

D. W. Griffith, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Mikey and Nicky" (1976; Elaine May), with Peter Falk and John Cassavetes.

Cinema I and II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022/0774)
Theatre 1: "The Shooting Party" (Alan Bridges).
Theatre 2: "Movers and Shakers" (William Asher), with Walter Matthau and Charles Grodin.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Grace Quigley" (Anthony Harvey), with Katharine Hepburn and Nick Nolte.
Theatre 2: "Rambo: First Blood Part II" (George P. Cosmatos), with Sylvester Stallone and Richard Crenna.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"The Purple Rose of Cairo" (†).

Loews New York Twin 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: May 29: "Gotcha!" (Jeff Kanew), with Anthony Edwards. From May 30: "Witness" (†).
Theatre 2: "A View to a Kill" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"The Gods Must Be Crazy" (Jamie Uys).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
Through May 30: Theatre closed.
From May 31: "Fletch" (Michael Ritchie), with Chevy Chase.

U. A. 85th St. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Desperately Seeking Susan" (†).

Loews Orpheum 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: "A View to a Kill" (†).
Theatre 2: "Brewster's Millions" (Walter Hill), with Richard Pryor and John Candy.

86th St. East, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Through May 30: "Gymkata."
From May 31: To be announced.

R.K.O. Century 86th St. Twin, Lexington at 86th. (289-8900)
Theatre 1: "Rambo: First Blood Part II" (George P. Cosmatos), with Sylvester Stallone and Richard Crenna.
Theatre 2: "Rambo: First Blood Part II."

WEST SIDE

Film Forum 1 and 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Theatre 1: "Gaza Ghetto" (1984; directed by PeA Holmquist, Joan Mandell, and Pierre Björklund; in Arabic, Hebrew, and English, with English subtitles).
Theatre 2: "Kaddish" (Steve Brand), a documentary.

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Mikey and Nicky" (1976; Elaine May), with Peter Falk and John Cassavetes.
Theatre 2: "The Brother from Another Planet" (John Sayles), with Joe Morton, Dee Dee Bridgewater, and Sayles.

Greenwich Playhouse 1 and 2, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Grace Quigley" (Anthony Harvey), with Katharine Hepburn and Nick Nolte.
Theatre 2: Through May 30: "Mask" (Peter Bogdanovich), with Cher, Eric Stoltz, and Sam Elliott. From May 31: "Fletch" (Michael Ritchie), with Chevy Chase.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "What Have I Done to Deserve This!" (†).
Theatre 2: "My New Partner" (Claude Zidi; in French), with Philippe Noiret.
Theatre 3: "Streetwise" (Martin Bell), a documentary.
Theatre 4: "A Private Function" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Witness" (†).
Theatre 2: "Stop Making Sense" (†).
Theatre 3: "Rambo: First Blood Part II" (George P. Cosmatos), with Sylvester Stallone and Richard Crenna.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"The Secret of the Sword," an animated film.

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (757-2715)
Through June 6: "Almost You" (Adam Brooks), with Brooke Adams and Griffin Dunne.
From June 7: "Lily in Love' (Karoly Makk), with Christopher Plummer and Maggie Smith.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Pumping Iron II: The Women" (George Butler).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Dangerous Moves" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"A Private Function" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
Through May 30: "Desperately Seeking Susan" (†).
From May 31: "Movers and Shakers" (William Asher), with Walter Matthau and Charles Grodin.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Amadeus" (†).
Theatre 2: "Streetwise" (Martin Bell), a documentary.
Theatre 3: "Jules and Jim" (†).

Cinema Studio 1 and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: Through June 1: "MacArthur's Children" (Masahiro Shinoda; in Japanese). From June 2: "The Holy Innocents" (Mario Camus; in Spanish).
Theatre 2: "The Purple Rose of Cairo" (†).

Embassy 72nd St. 1 and 2, B'way at 72nd. (724-6745)
Theatre 1: "George Stevens: A Filmmaker's Journey" (George Stevens, Jr.), a documentary.
Theatre 2: "Goodbye New York" (Amos Kollek), with Julie Hagerty and Kollek.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Brewster's Millions" (Walter Hill), with Richard Pryor and John Candy.
Theatre 2: "Rambo: First Blood Part II" (George P. Cosmatos), with Sylvester Stallone and Richard Crenna.
Theatre 3: "A View to a Kill" (†).
Theatre 4: "Grace Quigley" (Anthony Harvey), with Katharine Hepburn and Nick Nolte.
Theatre 5: "Witness" (†).
Theatre 6: Through May 30: "Desperately Seeking Susan" (†). From May 31: "Fletch" (Michael Ritchie), with Chevy Chase.

Olympia Quad, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Rambo: First Blood Part II" (George P. Cosmatos), with Sylvester Stallone and Richard Crenna.
Theatre 2: "Brewster's Millions" (Walter Hill), with Richard Pryor and John Candy.
Theatre 3: Through May 30: "Certain Fury." From May 31: "Future Cop."
Theatre 4: "Witness" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Theatres, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Police Academy 2: Their First Assignment" (directed by Jerry Paris), with Steve Guttenberg.
Theatre 2: Through June 6: "Gotcha!" (Jeff Kanew), with Anthony Edwards. From June 7: "The Goonies" (Richard Donner).
Theatre 3: "Stick" (†).
Theatre 4: "Mask" (Peter Bogdanovich), with Cher, Eric Stoltz, and Sam Elliott.
Theatre 5: Through May 30: "Ladyhawke" (†). From May 31: "Night Train to Terror."
Theatre 6: "The Killing Fields" (†).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (757-2408)
"The Secret of the Sword," an animated film.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, B'way at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: "Witness" (†).
Theatre 3: "Beverly Hills Cop" (†).
Theatre 4: "Just One of the Guys" (Lisa Gottlieb).

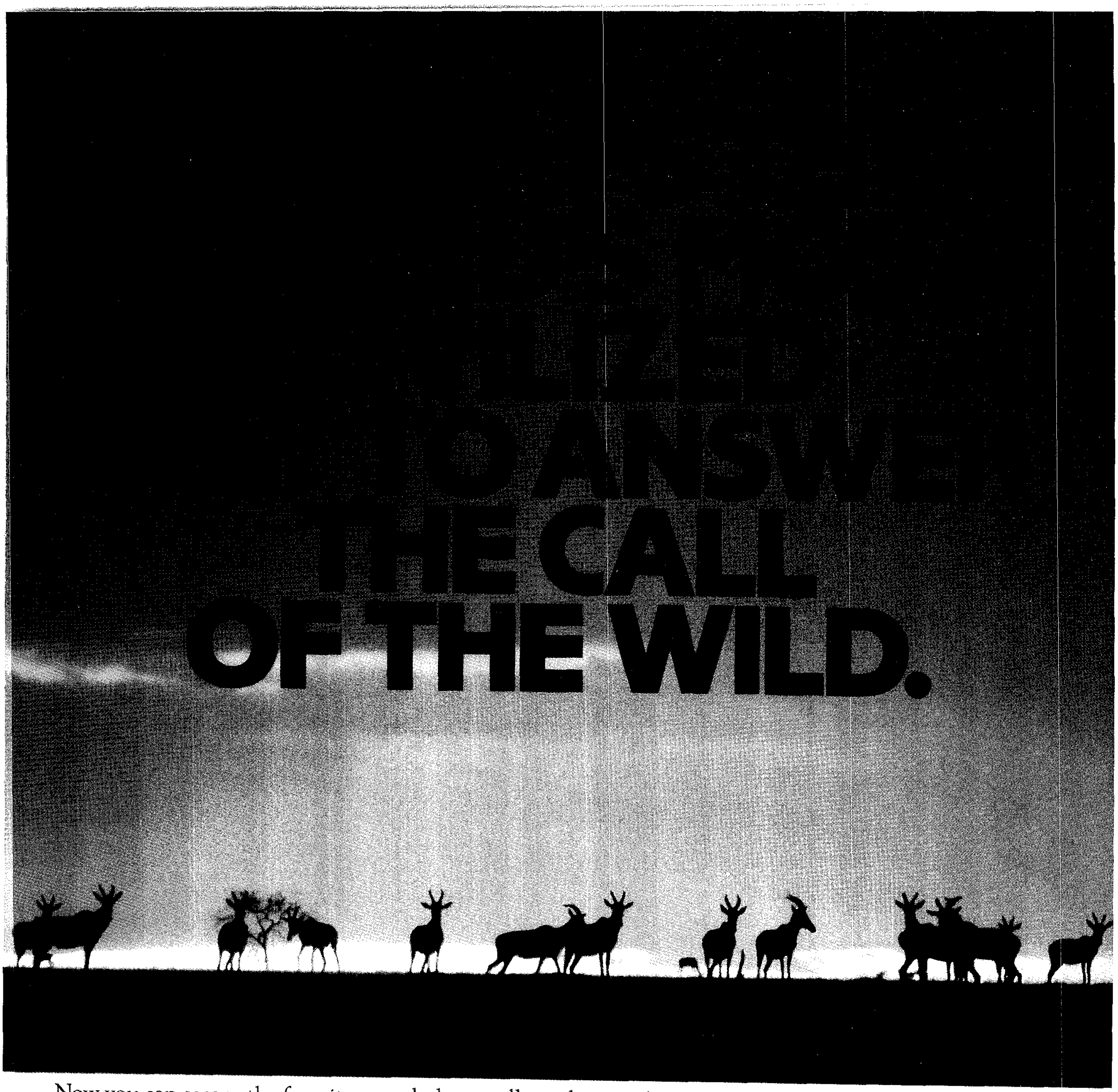
Loews Astor Plaza, B'way at 44th. (869-8340)
"A View to a Kill" (†).

Loews State 1 and 2, B'way at 45th. (575-5060)
Theatre 1: Through May 30: "Gymkata." From May 31: "Fletch" (Michael Ritchie), with Chevy Chase.
Theatre 2: "Brewster's Millions" (Walter Hill), with Richard Pryor and John Candy.

Movieland, B'way at 47th. (757-8320)
Through May 30: "Night Train to Terror."
From May 31: "Desperately Seeking Susan" (†).

New Embassy 49th Street, Seventh Ave. at 49th. (757-7003)
"The Care Bears Movie" (Arna Selznick), an animated film.

R.K.O. Century National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: Through May 30: "Girls Just



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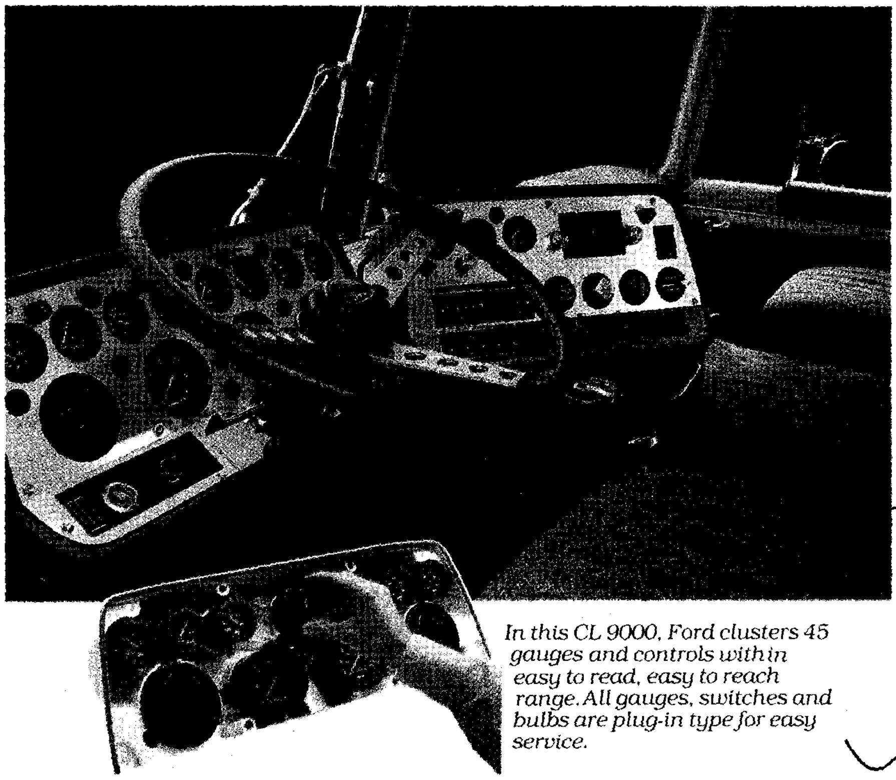

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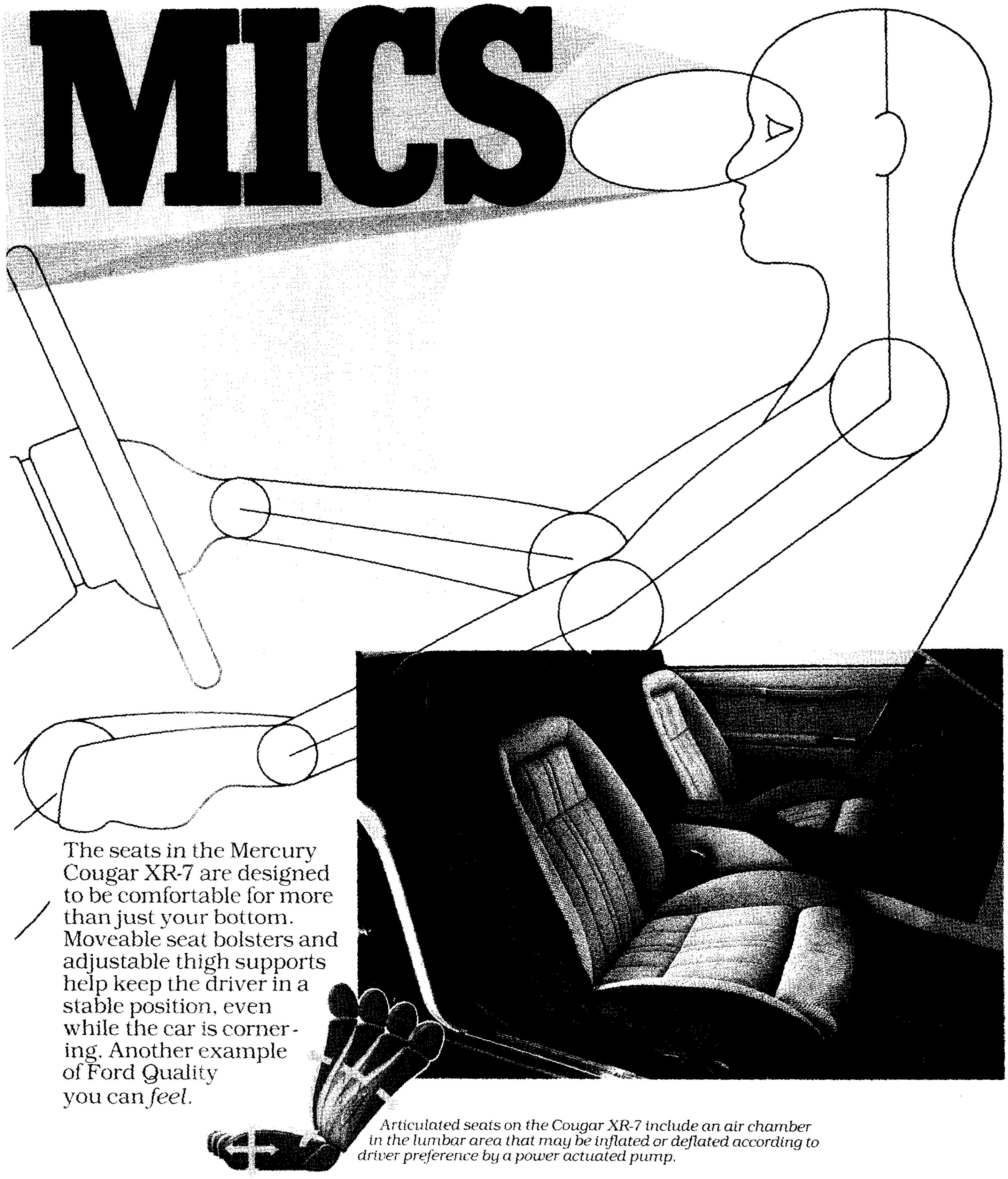

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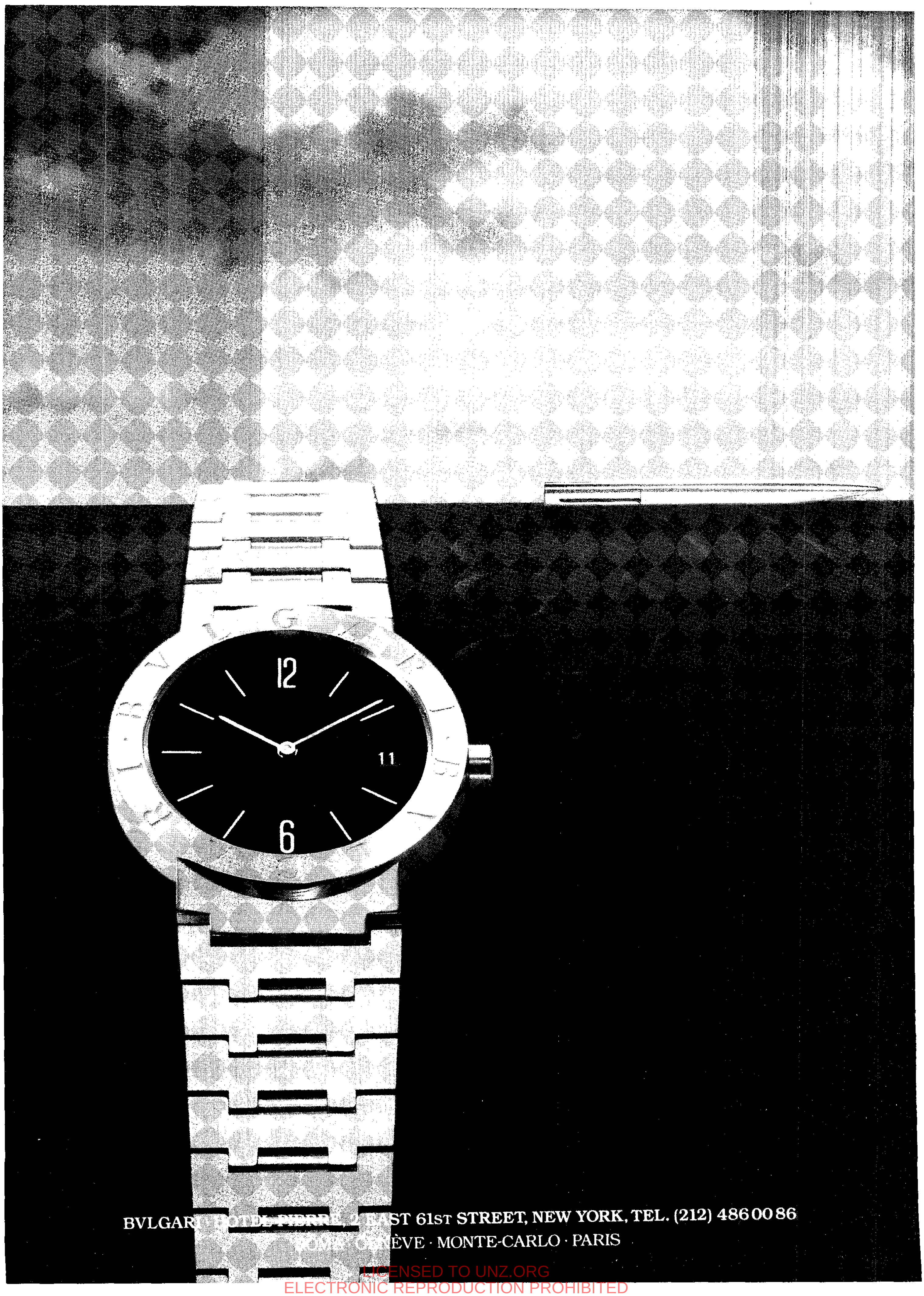
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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Want to Have Fun" (Alan Metter). From May 31: "Silent Madness."
Theatre 2: "Certain Fury."

R.K.O. Century Warner Twin, B'way at 47th. (975-8369)
Theatre 1: "Rambo: First Blood Part II" (George P. Cosmatos), with Sylvester Stallone and Richard Crenna.
Theatre 2: "Rambo: First Blood Part II."

U. A. Twin 1 and 2, B'way at 49th. (247-1635)
Theatre 1: Through May 30: "Rappin' " (Joel Silberg). From May 31: "Future Cop."
Theatre 2: "Code of Silence" (Andy Davis), with Chuck Norris.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Agee Room, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560; on Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
"Enormous Changes at the Last Minute" (1983; directed by Ellen Hovde and Mirra Bank).

Bleecker St. Cinema, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560; on Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Through June 1: "The Man Who Knew Too Much" (1956; Alfred Hitchcock), with James Stewart and Doris Day; and "The Birds" (1963; Alfred Hitchcock), with Rod Taylor, Jessica Tandy, Suzanne Pleshette, and Tippi Hedren.
June 2-4: "Psycho" (1960; Alfred Hitchcock), with Anthony Perkins, Vera Miles, John Gavin, and Janet Leigh; and "Saboteur" (1942; Alfred Hitchcock), with Priscilla Lane, Robert Cummings, and Otto Kruger.
June 5-6: "Frenzy" (1972; Alfred Hitchcock), with Jon Finch, Barry Foster, Vivien Merchant, and Alec McCowen; and "Rope" (1948; Alfred Hitchcock), with James Stewart, John Dall, and Farley Granger.
From June 7: "Dial M for Murder" (1954; Alfred Hitchcock), with Ray Milland, Grace Kelly, Robert Cummings, Anthony Dawson, and John Williams; and "Strangers on a Train" (1951; Alfred Hitchcock), with Farley Granger, Robert Walker, and Ruth Roman.

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. at 57th. (757-2131)
May 29: "The Great Battle" (1971; Yuri Ozerov; a Russian film, in English); and "Mission to Moscow" (1943; Michael Curtiz), with Walter Huston, Ann Harding, and Oscar Homolka.
May 30: "The Longest Day" (1962), with Richard Burton, John Wayne, and Henry Fonda; and "Ballad of a Soldier" (1959; Grigori Chukhari; in Russian).
From May 31: "Rembetiko" (1985; Costas Ferris; in Greek).

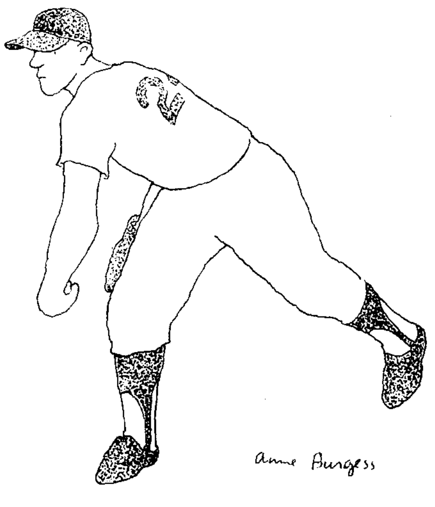
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through May 30: "The Conformist" (1970; Bernardo Bertolucci; in Italian), with Jean-Louis Trintignant, Stefania Sandrelli, and Dominique Sanda; and "The Stranger" (1967; Luchino Visconti; in French), with Marcello Mastroianni and Anna Karina.
May 31-June 1: "If . . . " (1969; Lindsay Anderson), with Malcolm McDowell; and "A Clockwork Orange" (1971; Stanley Kubrick), with Malcolm McDowell, Patrick Magee, and Adrienne Corri.
June 2: "The Damned" (†); and "The Night Porter" (1974; Liliana Cavani), with Dirk Bogarde and Charlotte Rampling.
June 3-4: "Public Affairs" and "Dixie Ray," both X-rated.
June 5-6: "Another Country" (1984; Marek Kanievska), with Rupert Everett; and "Cal" (1984; Pat O'Connor), with Helen Mirren and John Lynch.
June 7-8: "Gallipoli" (1981; Peter Weir; an Australian film), with Mel Gibson, Mark Lee, and Bill Kerr; and "The Year of Living Dangerously" (1983; Peter Weir), with Mel Gibson, Sigourney Weaver, and Linda Hunt.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Through June 4: "Moron Movies."
From June 5: To be announced.

Hollywood Twin Cinema 1, 8th Ave. at 47th. (246-0717)
Through May 30: "Revenge of the Nerds" (1984; Jeff Kanew), with Robert Carradine and Anthony Edwards; and "Bachelor Party" (1984; Neal Israel), with Tom Hanks and Adrian Zmed.
May 31-June 1: "The Postman Always Rings Twice" (1981; Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson, Jessica Lange, and John Colicos; and "Sophie's Choice" (1982; Alan J. Pakula), with Meryl Streep, Kevin Kline, and Peter MacNicol.
June 2: "The Dark Crystal" (1982; Jim Henson and Frank Oz); and "The Lord of the Rings" (1978; Ralph Bakshi).
June 3-4: "Heavy Traffic" (†) and "Fritz the Cat" (†).
June 5-6: "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance" (1962; John Ford), with John Wayne, James Stewart, Vera Miles, and Lee Marvin; and "Red River" (1948; Howard Hawks), with Montgomery Clift, John Wayne, Walter Brennan, and Joanne Dru.
June 7-8: "La Cage aux Folles" (1979) and "La Cage aux Folles II" (1980), both films in French, directed by Edouard Molinaro, with Ugo Tognazzi and Michel Serrault.

Hollywood Twin Cinema 2, 8th Ave. at 47th. (246-0717)
Through May 30: "The Falcon and the Snowman" (1985; John Schlesinger), with Timothy Hutton and Sean Penn; and "The Terminator" (1984; James Cameron), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.
May 31-June 6: "Birdy" (1984; Alan Parker), with Matthew Modine and Nicolas Cage; and "Alamo Bay" (1985; Louis Malle), with Ed Harris and Amy Madigan.
From June 7: To be announced.

Metro Cinema, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
May 29: "Our Hospitality" (1923; Buster Keaton and Jack G. Blystone; a silent film), with Keaton; and two Buster Keaton short films.
May 30: "Battling Butler" (1926; Buster Keaton; a silent film), with Keaton; and two Buster Keaton short films.
May 31: "Seven Chances" (1925; Buster Keaton; a silent film), with Keaton; and two Buster Keaton short films.
June 1: "Steamboat Bill, Jr." (1927; Charles Riesner; a silent film), with Buster Keaton; and two Buster Keaton short films.
June 2: "College" (†); and two Buster Keaton short films.
June 3: "First Name: Carmen" (1984; Jean-Luc Godard; in French); and "Every Man for Himself" (1980; Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Isabelle Huppert, Jacques Dutronc, and Nathalie Baye.
June 4: "Double Indemnity" (†) and "The Lost Weekend" (†).
June 5: "The Seven Samurai" (†).
June 6: "Les Enfants Terribles" (†); and "Bob le Flambeur" (1955; Jean-Pierre Melville; in French), with Isabel Corey and Roger Duchesne.
From June 7: "Perfect" (1985; James Bridges), with John Travolta and Jamie Lee Curtis.



Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
Through May 30: "Thanks a Million" (1937; Roy del Ruth), with Fred Allen and Dick Powell; and "Wake Up and Live" (1937; Sidney Lanfield), with Walter Winchell, Alice Faye, Patsy Kelly, and Ben Bernie.
May 31-June 1: "Leave Her to Heaven" (1945; John M. Stahl), with Gene Tierney, Cornel Wilde, Jeanne Crain, and Vincent Price; and "Laura" (1944; Otto Preminger), with Gene Tierney, Clifton Webb, Vincent Price, Dana Andrews, and Judith Anderson.
June 2-3: "Pigskin Parade" (†); and "Poor Little Rich Girl" (1936; Irving Cummings), with Shirley Temple, Alice Faye, and Jack Haley.
June 4-5: "Forty Guns" (1958; Sam Fuller), with Barbara Stanwyck and Barry Sullivan; and "My Darling Clementine" (†).
June 6-8: "Springtime in the Rockies" (1942; Irving Cummings), with Betty Grable and John Payne; and "The Gang's All Here" (1943; Busby Berkeley), with Alice Faye, James Ellison, and Carmen Miranda.

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (222-3370)
May 29: "Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid" (1982; Carl Reiner), with Steve Martin and Rachel Ward; and "My Favorite Brunette" (1947; Elliott Nugent), with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour.
May 30: "None Shall Escape" (1944; André de Toth), with Marsha Hunt and Alexander Knox; and "Professor Mamlock" (1938; Adolf Minkin; in Russian).
May 31: "The Earrings of Madame de . . . " (1953; Max Ophuls; in French), with Charles Boyer, Danielle Darrieux, and Vittorio De Sica; and "Lola Montès" (1955; Max Ophuls; in French), with Martine Carol, Peter Ustinov, and Anton Walbrook.
June 1: A program of four Laurel and Hardy short films.
June 2: "The Tin Drum" (†).
June 3: A program of Porky Pig cartoons.
June 4: "Personal Best" (1982; Robert Towne), with Mariel Hemingway, Scott Glenn, Patrice Donnelly, and Kenny Moore; and ". . . All the Marbles" (1981; Robert Aldrich), with Peter Falk and Burt Young.
June 5: "High and Low" (†) and "Stray Dog" (†).
June 6: "Modern Romance" (1981; Albert Brooks), with Brooks and Kathryn Harrold; and "Real Life" (1979; Albert Brooks), with Brooks and Charles Grodin.
June 7-8: "Secret Honor" (1985; Robert Altman).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
May 29: "Case of the Stuttering Bishop" (1937; William Clemens), with Donald Woods; and "The Case of the Velvet Claws" (1936; William Clemens), with Warren William.
May 30: "The Treasure of Sierra Madre" (1948; John Huston), with Walter Huston, Humphrey Bogart, Tim Holt, Alfonso Bedoya, and Robert Blake; and "Key Largo" (1948; John Huston), with Humphrey Bogart, Edward G. Robinson, and Lauren Bacall.
May 31-June 1: "On the Waterfront" (1954; Elia Kazan), with Marlon Brando, Lee J. Cobb, Eva Marie Saint, Karl Malden, and Rod Steiger; and "The Wild One" (1954; Laslo Benedek), with Marlon Brando, Mary Murphy, and Lee Marvin.
June 2: "Vampyr" (1932; Carl Dreyer; in German), with Julian West, Henriette Gérard, Rena Mandel, and Sybille Schmitz; and "Day of Wrath" (1943; Carl Dreyer; in Danish), with Lisbeth Movin.
June 3: "Nibelungen Saga" (†).
June 4: "Double Wedding" (1937; Richard Thorpe), with Myrna Loy and William Powell; and "I Love You Again" (†).
June 5: "A Tale of Two Cities" (1935; Jack Conway), with Ronald Colman, Edna May Oliver, and Blanche Yurka; and "The Prisoner of Zenda" (1937; John Cromwell), with Madeleine Carroll and Ronald Colman.
June 6: "The Star" (1953; Stuart Heisler), with Bette Davis and Sterling Hayden; and "I Could Go On Singing" (1963; Ronald Neame), with Judy Garland, Dirk

Bogarde, Jack Klugman, and Aline MacMahon.

June 7-8: "Ministry of Fear" (†) and "The Fallen Idol" (†).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490; a limited number of tickets are available to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing.)

THEATRE 1: May 30 at 2:30: "The Turn of the Tide" (1935; directed by Norman Walker), with Fisher White and Geraldine Fitzgerald. . . . ¶ May 30 at 6: "Moscow Nights" (1935; Anthony Asquith), with Harry Baur and Laurence Olivier. . . . ¶ May 30 at 8: "Educating Rita" (1983; Lewis Gilbert), with Michael Caine and Julie Walters. . . . ¶ May 31 at 2:30: "Nothing but the Best" (1963; Clive Donner), with Alan Bates, Denholm Elliott, Millicent Martin, and Harry Andrews. . . . ¶ May 31 at 6: "Sapphire" (1959; Basil Dearden), with Yvonne Mitchell, Nigel Patrick, and Bernard Miles. . . . ¶ June 1 at 2: "The Servant" (1963; Joseph Losey), with Dirk Bogarde, James Fox, and Sarah Miles. . . . ¶ June 1 at 5: "This Sporting Life" (1963; Lindsay Anderson), with Richard Harris and Rachel Roberts. . . . ¶ June 2 at 2: "If . . ." (1969; Lindsay Anderson), with Malcolm McDowell. . . . ¶ June 2 at 5: "Britannia Hospital" (1982; Lindsay Anderson), with Leonard Rossiter. . . . ¶ June 3 at 2:30: "This Sporting Life." . . . ¶ June 3 at 6: "The Servant." . . . ¶ June 4 at 2:30: "If. . . ." . . . ¶ June 6 at 2:30 and 6: "Bed and Sofa" (1926; Abram Room; in Russian, with English intertitles). . . . ¶ June 7 at 2:30: "Britannia Hospital." . . . ¶ June 7 at 6: "Sapphire." . . . ¶ June 8 at 2 and 5: "Chariots of Fire" (1981; Hugh Hudson), with Ben Cross and Ian Charleson.

THEATRE 2: May 30 at 3 and 6:30: "Grand Openings" (1980; Howard Silver) and "Godzilla Meets Mona Lisa" (1984; Ralph Arlyck). . . . ¶ May 31 at 3: "Woman Basketball Player No. 5" (1957; Xie Jin; in Chinese, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ May 31 at 6:30: "The Red Detachment of Women" (1960; Xie Jin; in Chinese, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ June 1 at 2:30: "Big Li, Young Li, and Old Li" (1962; Xie Jin; in Chinese, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ June 1 at 5:30: "Two Stage Sisters" (1964; Xie Jin; in Chinese, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ June 2 at 2:30: "A Revolutionary" (1983; Xie Jin; in Chinese, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ June 2 at 5:30: "The Red Detachment of Women." . . . ¶ June 4 at 3 and 6:30: "The Oyster Princess" (1919; Ernst Lubitsch; a German silent film, with no English intertitles). . . . ¶ June 6 at 3 and 6:30: "I Miss the Sun" (1983; Mary Halawani) and "The Tribe" (1983; Lilly Rivlin), both documentaries. . . . ¶ June 7 at 3: "Youth" (1977; Xie Jin; in Chinese, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ June 7 at 6:30: "A Revolutionary." . . . ¶ June 8 at 2:30: "The Legend of Tianyuan Mountain" (1981; Xie Jin; in Chinese, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ June 8 at 5:30: "Woman Basketball Player No. 5."

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—Through June 2, a series of programs composed of films and video works made during the past two years. The schedule of performances is complicated; our best advice is to phone the museum for titles, schedules, and ticket information. Closed Mondays.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN THESE PAGES DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

Alphaville (1965)—Jean-Luc Godard ventures into science fiction, with mixed results. The picture is brilliant, yet it's no good. At first, the dehumanization is funny and alluring and a little eerie, but the people of Alphaville are ruled by a giant computer, and soullessness can be very monotonous. The movie was shot at night, and it seems to give off powerfully soporific vapors, especially since the comic-strip story is an uninspired mixture of sci-fi and private eye that never takes hold. With Eddie Constantine as cool, tough Lemmy Caution (his face is so tired and leathery he's like an old shoe), Anna Karina as the most radiant of robots, and Akim Tamiroff, Laszlo Szabo, Michel Delahaye, and Howard Vernon. Written and directed by Godard. In French. (Little Theatre, Public Theatre; starting June 4.)

Amadeus—The lofty playwright Peter Shaffer has the minor composer Salieri (F. Murray Abraham) declaring war on Heaven for gypping him, and determined to ruin the incomparable Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Tom Hulce) because God's voice is speaking through him. The director, Miloš Forman, trudges through the movie as if every step were a major contribution to art, and he keeps the audience hooked. Some redeeming qualities: Mozart's music, Twyla Tharp's staging of the dances and opera excerpts, and Abraham's eager, slimy Salieri. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/29/84.) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Beverly Hills Cop—The plot is just a peg for little set pieces in which the street-smart Eddie Murphy, in his worn-out sweatshirts, saunters through swank Beverly Hills locations, tells whopping lies, and outsmarts the white dumbos. Hotfooting the picture to keep it going, he rattles off pitifully undistinguished profanity, but we're cued to react to every stupid four-letter word as riotous. With Judge Reinhold, Stephen Elliott, Bronson Pinchot, Ronny Cox, Steven Berkoff, Lisa Eilbacher, and John Ashton. Directed by Martin Brest. (12/24/84) (Gotham Cinema, and Embassy. . . . ¶ St. Marks Cinema; through May 30.)

College (1927)—A beautiful little comedy. Buster Keaton is a bookworm, working his way through college and determined to become a star athlete. The story line isn't as miraculously fresh as in a couple of his films, but it allows for some of his most startlingly inventive stunts. Despite the many pilferings from this film (it has been a gold mine for other comedians), the routines are executed with such impeccable precision and with such an air of confident innocence that they are charged with surprise—and probably will be forever. (Metro Cinema; June 2.)

The Damned (1969)—Luchino Visconti's view of the depravity in the Third Reich—grandiose, lurid, sluggish. The Nazis are rotten, scheming degenerates; green lights play on their faces and they look like werewolves talking politics. The centerpiece is the orgy and massacre of Roehm's homosexual Brown Shirts, with gorgeous naked boys in black lace panties; he doesn't seem sure what attitude to take and he stages it immaculately, reverentially. Ingrid Thulin is the fag-hag mother, a Krupp-Borgia baroness who turns her son (Helmut Berger) into a dope-addicted transvestite. It's really the basic mother-son romance of homoerotic literature, dressed up in Nazi drag. With Dirk Bogarde, Helmut Griem, Charlotte Rampling, Florinda Bolkan, and Umberto Orsini. (Cinema Village; June 2.)

Dangerous Moves—With Michel Piccoli, directed by Richard Dembo. In French. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Paris.)

Desperately Seeking Susan—Set in the punk world, it's a mistaken-identity fantasy about doe-eyed Roberta (Rosanna Arquette), a suburban housewife in New Jersey, who becomes fixated on a drifter named Susan (played by the rock star Madonna). This attempt at screwball charm was directed by Susan Seidelman, who wipes out her actors. All their responsiveness is cut off—there's nothing going on in them. No subtext—nothing. Nobody comes through except Madonna, who comes through as Madonna (she moves regally, an indolent, trampy goddess), and the cinematographer Edward Lachman, whose lighting gives the East Village shops and streets a funky prettiness. The cast includes Robert Joy, Aidan Quinn, Mark Blum, Laurie Metcalf, and the comedian Steven Wright. (4/22/85) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Eastside Cinema, and U. A. 85th St. East. . . . ¶ Loews Paramount, and Loews 84th Street Showplace; through May 30. . . . ¶ Movieland; starting May 31.)

Double Indemnity (1944)—Every turn and twist is exactly calculated and achieves its effect with the simplest of means; this shrewd, smoothly tawdry thriller is one of the high points of forties films. The director, Billy Wilder, collaborated with Raymond Chandler in adapting James M. Cain's story, and it's a tribute to them that one is likely to remember the names of the principal characters. Barbara Stanwyck's Phyllis Dietrichson is perhaps the best acted and the most fixating of all the slutty, cold-blooded femmes fatales of the *film-noir* genre. With her bold stare, her sneering, over-lipsticked, thick-looking mouth, and her strategically displayed legs, she's a living entrapment device. Fred MacMurray's Walter Neff, an insurance salesman, is the patsy she ensnares in a plot to kill her businessman husband and collect on the double-indemnity clause in his policy; And as Keyes, the claims investigator for the insurance company, Edward G. Robinson handles his sympathetic role with an easy mastery that gives the film some realistic underpinnings. (Metro Cinema; June 4.)

Les Enfants Terribles (1949; "The Strange Ones")—The director Jean-Pierre Melville expands Cocteau's novel about the shared disorder and confused narcissism of a brother and sister into a baroque tragicomedy. The movie glides along, gathering intensity, as the characters move—compulsively, as in a dream—toward self-destruction. With Nicole Stéphane, fiercely elegant as the dominating Elisabeth, and Edouard Dermithe, Renée Cosima, and Jacques Bernard. In French. (Metro Cinema; June 6.)

The Fallen Idol (1948)—Carol Reed and Graham Greene collaborated on this tricky, highly original thriller. It's about the muddled attempt of an eight-year-old boy (Bobby Henrey), the son of the French Ambassador to England, to protect the Embassy butler, Baines (Ralph Richardson), whom he idolizes, from a charge of murder. The plot is just about perfect, and there are two wonderful parallel episodes, when the child attempts to impart vital information, which two sets of adults ignore because they think he's just prattling nonsense. Maybe it's too deliberate, though, with its stylized lighting and its rigid pacing—you wait an extra beat between the low-key lines of dialogue. It's a polite thriller—which is close to a contradiction in terms. With Michèle Morgan and Sonia Dresdel. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; June 7-8.)

Fritz the Cat (1972)—An X-rated cartoon, full of good humor, bad taste, randiness, benign ethnic jokes, and other staples of New York wit. The rating is a pity; everyone who is officially underage according to the rating system knows more about Robert Crumb's famous Fritz than his parents are likely to. The New York landscapes are drawn with great delicacy, and the New York animalized characters with purple amplitude; the voices are human. Directed and scripted by Ralph Bakshi. This is one of the few full-length cartoons with an ear as accurate as a good play's. (Hollywood Twin Cinema 1; June 3-4.)

Heavy Traffic (1973)—Ralph Bakshi, begetter of "Fritz the Cat" (see above), wrote and directed this outrageous and sombre full-length cartoon about life in Manhattan. It was conceived in love and loathing and executed with a savage gift that is often disruptingly funny. The graphics elide from animation into realistic acting, and actual sets are mixed with photographed city backdrops that sometimes have haunting effects created in the darkroom. (Hollywood Twin Cinema 1; June 3-4.)

High and Low (1963)—A first-rate detective thriller about a kidnapping. It happens to have been made in Japan, but it is very like the best Hitchcock. Directed by Akira Kurosawa, and starring Toshiro Mifune. In Japanese. (Thalia; June 5.)

I Love You Again (1940)—Bum title but surprisingly lively comedy. William Powell is

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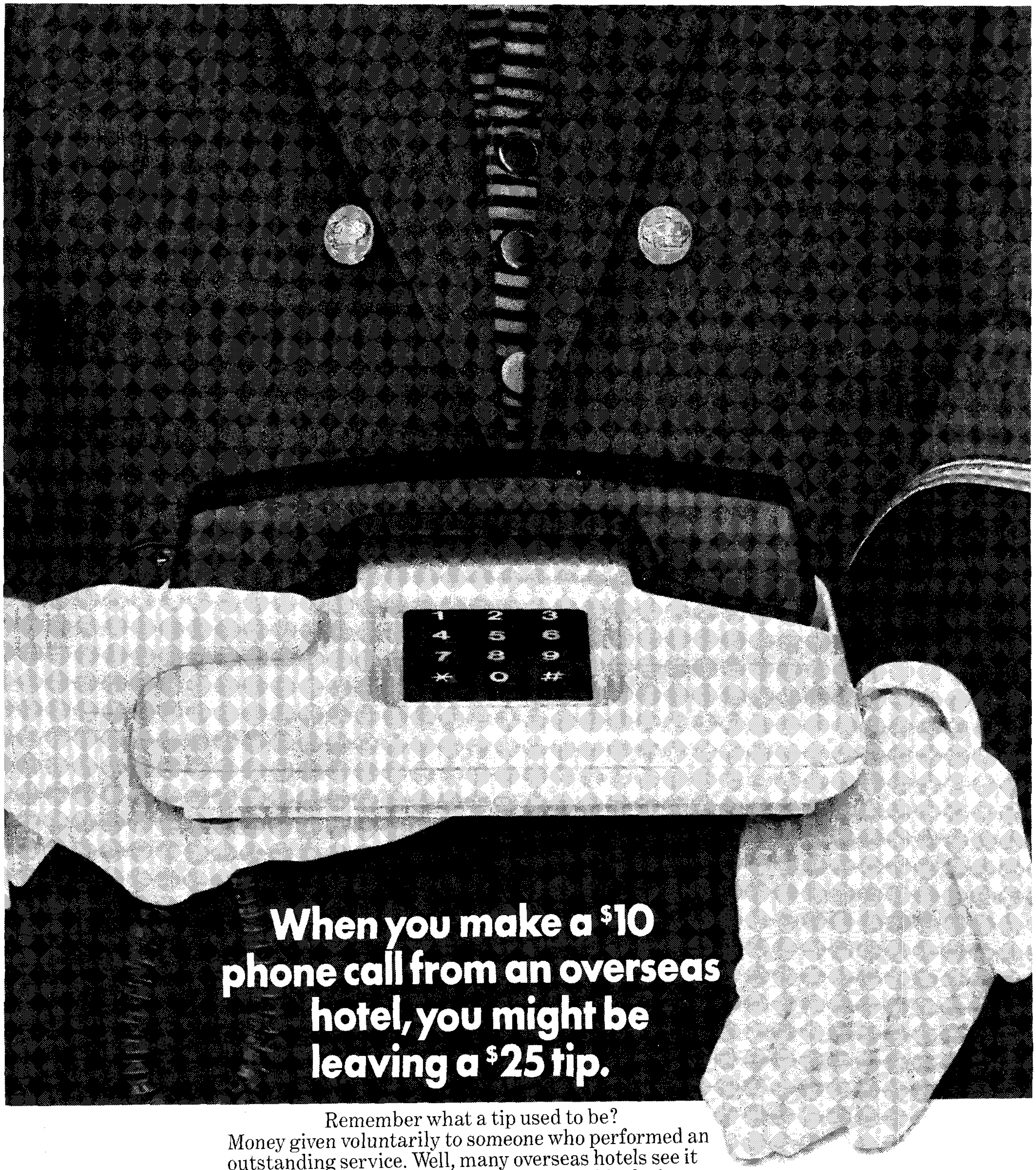
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the slick con man who awakes from a nine-year bout of amnesia to discover (with horror) that he has settled down to a job, married Myrna Loy, joined the Elks, and taken to wearing a straw hat. W. S. Van Dyke directed. With Frank McHugh and Edmund Lowe. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; June 4.)

JULES AND JIM (1962)—François Truffaut's celebration of bohemian life in France and Germany in the years of artistic ferment between the First World War and the Second. The Austrian, Jules (Oskar Werner), and the Frenchman, Jim (Henri Serre), have a peaceful friendship. But when they are with Catherine (Jeanne Moreau) they feel alive; anything may happen. She's the catalyst, the troublemaker, the source of despair as well as the source of joy, an enchantress. Catherine marries Jules, who can't hold her, and, in despair, he encourages Jim's interest in her—"that way, she'll still be *ours*." She insists on her freedom to leave men, but if they leave her (as Jim does) she is as devastated and as helpless as any clinging vine (perhaps *more* devastated—she can't even ask for sympathy). Elliptical, full of wit and radiance, this is the best movie ever made about what most of us think of as the Scott Fitzgerald period. In French. (Lincoln Plaza.)

THE KILLING FIELDS—The British film shows us the Khmer Rouge transforming Cambodia into a nationwide gulag, and the scenes of this genocidal revolution have the breadth and terror of something deeply imagined. The movie tells the story of how Sydney Schanberg (Sam Waterston), who was the *Times* correspondent in Cambodia from 1972 to 1975, was separated from his interpreter and assistant, Pran (Haing S. Ngor), and of his remorse and general anguish until the wily, resourceful Pran, after four years of slave labor and hiding, made his way into Thailand, late in 1979, and got word to him. It's written like a TV docudrama, and it bogs down in the crosscutting between Pran's experiences of the atrocities in Cambodia and Schanberg's guilt and misery in various settings in the U.S. But it's by no means a negligible movie. Roland Joffé, making his début as a movie director, and the cinematographer, Chris Menges, give us imagery that suggests the work of a macabre lyric poet, and there are accomplished performances—most notably by John Malkovich, Bill Paterson, and Athol Fugard. (12/10/84) (Criterion Theatres.)

LADYHAWKE—Set in the Middle Ages, it's about the romance between Princess Isabeau (Michelle Pfeiffer) and the noble Navarre (Rutger Hauer), which is cursed by an evil sorcerer-bishop (John Wood). Each sunrise, Isabeau turns into a hawk; each sundown, Navarre turns into a black wolf. Just about everything connected with the movie is big except the storytelling instinct of its director, Richard Donner. It's a limp and dreary movie. The lovers are helped by a boy thief, played by Matthew Broderick, who is like a contemporary urban-American adolescent placed in medieval France—the effect is something like putting, say, a boy Woody Allen at Robert Taylor's elbow in "Ivanhoe." With Leo McKern and Ken Hutchison. (5/13/85) (Sutton. . . . ¶ Criterion Theatres; through May 30.)

LOST IN AMERICA—Original and pleasantly snappy. It lacks the fullness of a major comedy, but Albert Brooks, who stars in it and directed, is on to something: satirizing the upper middle class from within, he shows the nagging terror along with the complacency. And he keeps you laughing fairly steadily. As David, an L.A. advertising whiz, he's an anxious wreck who tortures himself and his wife over every detail of his existence. With her little-girl breathiness and her look of panic, Julie Hagerty is an ideal choice for the timid, depressed woman who puts up with him. These two buy a luxury motor home, and, with the security of a nest egg of roughly a hundred and forty-five thousand dollars, set out to find themselves and get in touch with the real America. With Garry Marshall, Art Frankel, and Michael Greene. (4/8/85) (R.K.O. Century Art; through May 30. . . . ¶ Manhattan; through June 6.)

THE LOST WEEKEND (1945)—Charles Jackson's novel about a well-brought-up, frustrated,

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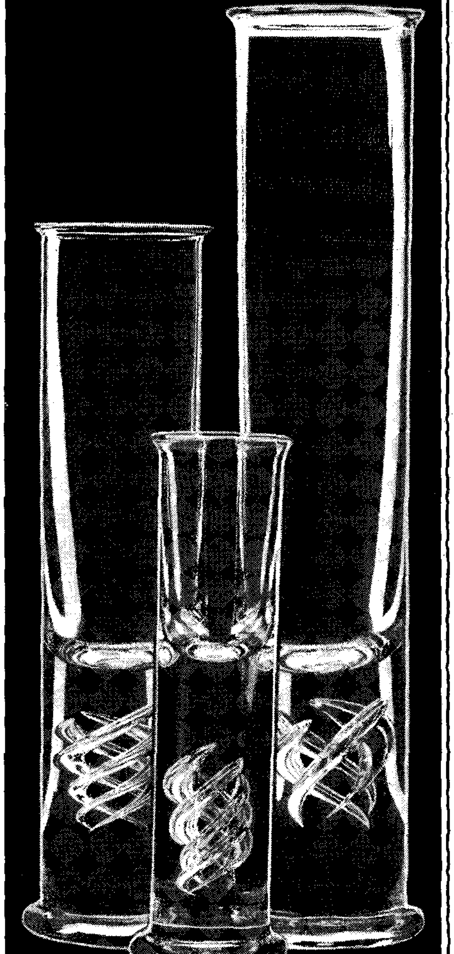

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dipsomaniacal writer who goes on a five-day binge that lands him in Bellevue was turned into an unusually daring popular melodrama by the writing team of Charles Brackett (who produced) and Billy Wilder (who directed). As the star, Ray Milland, reprieved from his usual lightweight leading-man roles, surprised the public with his tautness and irony. The picture lacks fluidity, and the slowly paced scenes seem overcalculated. What it has is the Brackett-and-Wilder specialty—a distinctive cruel (and sometimes cruelly funny) edge. And there are some famous sequences: the hero's lust for a drink during "Libiamo," the opening aria of "La Traviata;" his long, plodding walk along Third Avenue in an attempt to hawk his typewriter when the pawnshops are closed for Yom Kippur. With Frank Faylen. Howard Da Silva and Jane Wyman. (Metro Cinema; June 4.)

MINISTRY OF FEAR (1944)—Very little of Graham Greene's mystery novel survives in this unmemorable picture, directed by Fritz Lang. As melodramas of the period go, however, this one is better made than most. Ray Milland has just been released from an insane asylum, where he was confined for murdering his wife, when he is drawn into a plot by a gang of German spies who are after defense plans. The heroine is the unimposing Marjorie Reynolds; the villain is that falsetto cutthroat Dan Duryea. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; June 7-8.)

MY DARLING CLEMENTINE (1946)—John Ford's poetic Western with Henry Fonda as Wyatt Earp, Walter Brennan as hateful Old Man Clanton, and Victor Mature coaxed into a surprisingly good performance as a mutinous Doc Holliday. (Regency; June 4-5.)

NIBELUNGEN SAGA (1924)—Utterly extraordinary gigantic heroes, trailing processions, and a romantic mystique. Fritz Lang's bizarre, monumental German silent film, conceived as a tribute to the nation, was in two full-length parts—"Siegfried" and "Kriemhild's Revenge"—and the second, made a year after the first, is the madder of the two. The first tends to be static and ornamental; the second is packed with contrapuntal visual rhythms. It makes a picture like "Caligari" seem as routine as a TV sitcom. At the ending of "Siegfried," Brünnhilde has had Siegfried killed, and his widow, Kriemhild, swears revenge. In the second picture, Kriemhild marries Attila the Hun and begins the devastation—massacres, flames, chaos. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; June 3.)

A PASSAGE TO INDIA—This admirable version of E. M. Forster's 1924 novel about the tragicomedy of British colonial rule was adapted, directed, and edited by David Lean, who knows how to do pomp and the moral hideousness of empire better than practically anybody else around. Peggy Ashcroft comes through with a transcendent piece of acting as Mrs. Moore, and Judy Davis is close to perfection as the repressed Miss Quested, who longs for adventure; they are the two women whose attempt to get to know the Indians socially results in a charge of attempted rape against Dr. Aziz, played by Victor Banerjee, a fine, fluid actor who's like a piece of erotic sculpture. It may not be the highest praise to say that a movie is orderly and dignified, but of its kind this "Passage to India" is awfully good, until the last half hour or so; the concluding scenes wobble all over the place. The cast is just about irreproachable. It includes James Fox, Nigel Havers, Art Malik, Michael Culver, Saeed Jaffrey, Roshan Seth, and Sandra Hotz. (2 hours and 43 minutes.) (1/14/85) (34th St. East; through June 6.)

PIGSKIN PARADE (1936)—It's beyond belief—atrocious and yet funny and enjoyable. A Twentieth Century-Fox musical (that's not a recommendation, as anyone who went to musicals knows), featuring the young, pudgy, budding talent Judy Garland (three years before "The Wizard of Oz"), Patsy Kelly, Betty Grable, Stuart Erwin, Dixie Dunbar, Jack Haley, and the Yacht Club Boys. David Butler directed. (Regency; June 2-3.)

A PRIVATE FUNCTION—It never quite makes the final leap into lewd farce, but it's pretty funny anyway. The action is set in a small Yorkshire town in 1947, during the worst of the postwar austerity, and the plot involves the efforts of the local pillars of society (Denholm Elliott, John Normington, Richard Griffiths) to fatten a hidden, "unlicensed" pig for a banquet celebrating the nuptials of Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip. They run into trouble when the pig is stolen by a mild-mannered chiropodist (Michael Palin), who is encouraged by his Lady Macbeth of a wife (Maggie Smith). The movie is trivial, but alive and unruly; the characters cheat and conspire on such a low level that it suggests "Volpone" set in a cabbage patch. With Liz Smith, Bill Paterson, and Rachel Davies. Directed by Malcolm Mowbray. (3/25/85) (Quad Cinema, and Cinema 3.)

THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO—The thirteenth movie that Woody Allen has directed, and possibly his finest creation. He wrote it for Mia Farrow, and it seems scaled to her cheekbones. The time is 1935, and she is Cecilia, who lives in a small town in New Jersey and can't hold a job for long because her thoughts wander away to the glamorous worlds she sees on the screen. Jeff Daniels plays a dashing young screen character who bounds down from the black-and-white image and into color, and takes Cecilia out of the theatre with him; he's also the ambitious young actor who arrives in the town to try to persuade the character to go back up on the screen where he belongs. Also with Danny Aiello, Stephanie Farrow, Zoe Caldwell, John Wood, Ed Herrmann, Van Johnson, and Dianne Wiest. (3/25/85) (Beekman, and Cinema Studio. . . . ¶ Murray Hill; through June 6.)

THE SEVEN SAMURAI (1954)—Seven hired knights defend a village against forty mounted bandits—their pay a few handfuls of rice. This three-and-a-half-hour epic on violence and action—Akira Kurosawa's masterpiece—has been widely imitated, but no one has come near it. With Toshiro Mifune and Takashi Shimura. In Japanese. (Metro Cinema; June 5.)

STICK—With Burt Reynolds, George Segal, and Candice Bergen; directed by Reynolds. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Criterion Theatres.)

STOP MAKING SENSE—Directed by Jonathan Demme, this concert film by the New York new-wave rock band Talking Heads is a continuous rock experience that keeps building, becoming ever more intense and euphoric. It's a happy movie from beginning to end. The lead singer, David Byrne, is a stupefying performer who gives the group its modernism—the undertone of repressed hysteria, which he somehow blends with freshness and adventurousness and a driving beat. He designed the stage lighting and the elegantly plain performance-art environment. The sound is better than live sound—it has been filtered and mixed and fussed over, so that it achieves ideal clarity. (11/26/84) (23rd St. West Triplex.)

STRAY DOG (1949)—A classic Kurosawa thriller, starring a youthful Toshiro Mifune. In Japanese. (Thalia; June 5.)

THE TIN DRUM (1980)—A very accomplished adaptation of Günter Grass's celebrated novel. The director, Volker Schlöndorff, also helped to prepare the screenplay. The terrifying young hero is well played by David Bennent. In German. (Thalia; June 2.)

A VIEW TO A KILL—With Roger Moore as James Bond, directed by John Glen. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Loews Orpheum, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Loews Astor Plaza.)

WHAT HAVE I DONE TO DESERVE THIS!—Directed by Pedro Almodóvar. In Spanish. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Quad Cinema.)

WITNESS—An eight-year-old Amish boy (Lukas Haas), on his first trip to a city, sees a murder taking place in the men's room of Philadelphia's Thirtieth Street train station. In order to protect the boy and his widowed mother (Kelly McGillis) from the killers, the police captain (Harrison Ford) who's in charge of the investigation tries to hide their identities, and, with a bullet wound in his side, drives them back to their farm in Lancaster County before he collapses. Directed by the Australian Peter Weir, the movie seems to take its view of the Amish from a quaint dreamland, a Brigadoon of tall golden wheat, and to take its squalid, hyped-up view of life in Philadelphia from prolonged exposure to TV cop shows. With Alexander Godunov, Patti LuPone, Josef Sommer, Danny Glover, and Jan Rubes. (2/25/85) (23rd St. West Triplex, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, Olympia Quad, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Loews New York Twin; starting May 30.)

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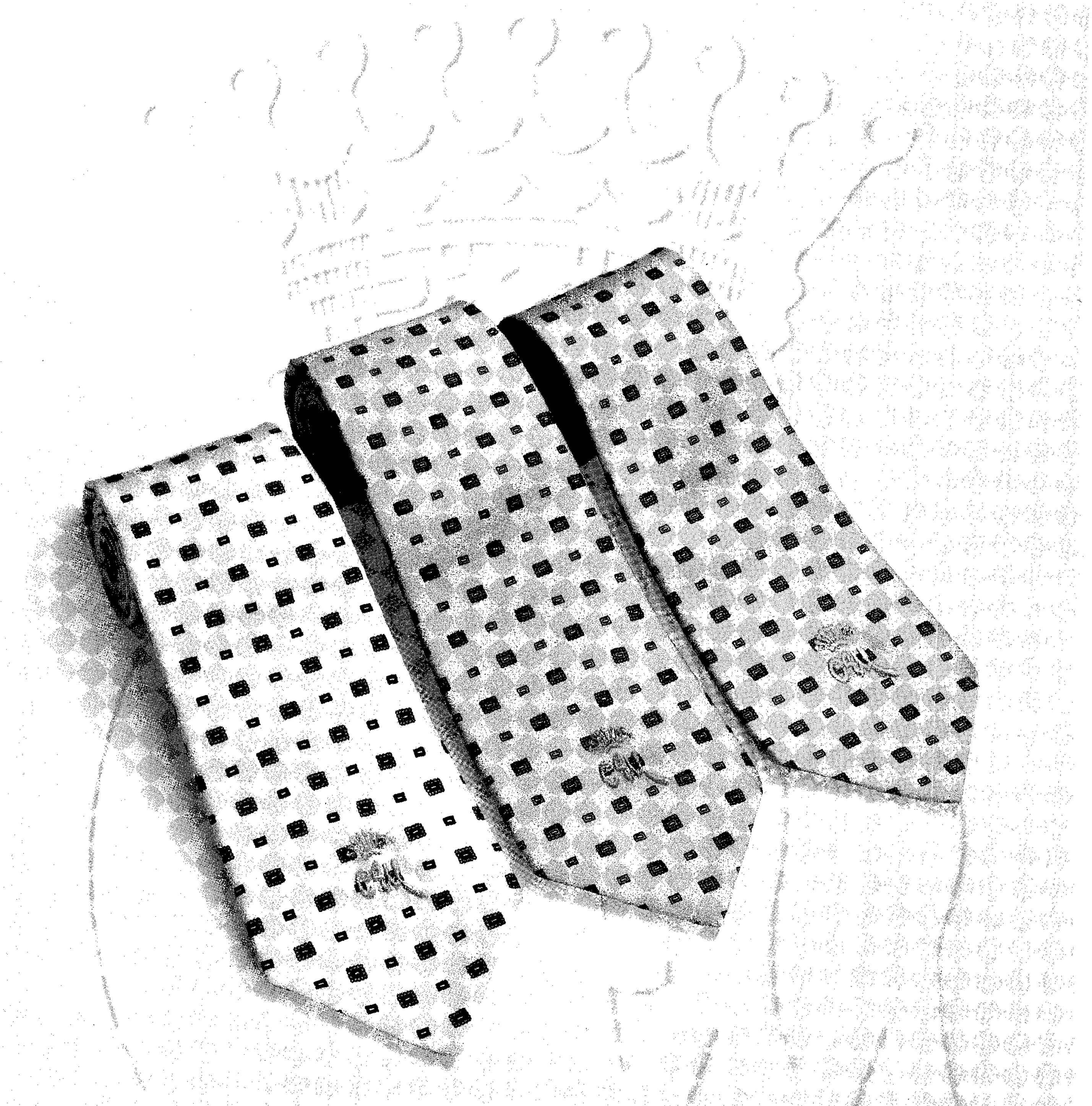

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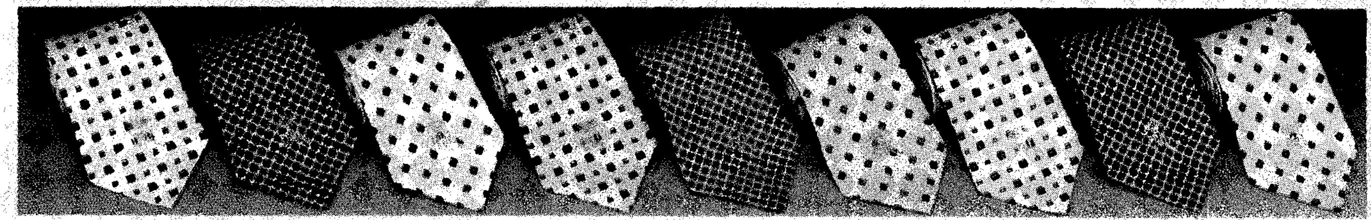

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

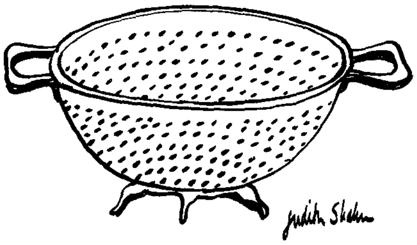
Notes and Comment

A FRIEND writes:

I was in Alabama on business the week before last, and when my work was done I took a long drive through the late-spring heat. Near the end of the afternoon, just south of Tuscaloosa, on Interstate 20, an intersection presented a choice that made me stop and think. Seventy miles to the southwest was Meridian, Mississippi, the birthplace of Dennis (Oil Can) Boyd, who is a young and inspiring pitcher on the staff of my team, the Boston Red Sox. The people in Meridian, according to a slew of sportswriters, call beer "oil," and as Dennis proved capable of drinking a goodly amount his sobriquet followed naturally. I thought it might be nice to visit Meridian and down a pint of multigrade in his honor. But equidistant to the southeast was the city of Selma, which, I recalled, Lyndon B. Johnson had once compared to Lexington, Concord, and Appomattox. ("At times, history and fate meet at a single time in a single place to shape a turning point in man's unending search for freedom," he told a national television audience in the spring of 1965. "So it was last week in Selma, Alabama.") The effect of that recollection was that, like some Civil War buff checking Fredericksburg and Shiloh and Bull Run off his list, I pointed my rented Renault down Route 14. The road runs through Marion (where, with the street lights doused, state troopers had beaten marchers led by the Reverend C. T. Vivian, and had shot and mortally wounded a young black man, Jimmie Lee Jackson) and then on into Selma.

The Alabama River flows past the city's downtown, where it is spanned by a bridge named for Edmund Winston Pettus, a home-town boy who served in the United States Senate after Reconstruction. It was across this bridge, of course, that Hosea Williams, of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and John Lewis, of the Student Nonviolent Coördinating Committee, led demonstrators one Sunday in that spring of 1965. They were routed—gassed and clubbed and horribly beaten by state troopers, and by deputies under the command of Sheriff Jim Clark. And it was across this bridge that, two weeks later, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., led a procession that continued for fifty miles, to Montgomery, where the group tried to present a petition to Governor George Wallace urging voting rights for blacks.

At Lexington, one is struck by the compactness of the Battle Green—it seems to have been designed for a fight, just as Fenway Park seems to have been built for baseball. And in Concord the narrowness of the river where the rude bridge crosses it makes it easy to imagine the deadly point-blank volleys. In Selma, standing on Water Avenue, on the city side of the bridge, I was most impressed by the unusually steep grade of the Pettus Bridge. It is impossible to see past the crest—if you marched up the bridge, you wouldn't know until you'd reached the top what waited on the other side. And how frightening the retreat down the slope must have looked to those on the way up—bleeding demonstrators tumbling pell-mell down that pitch, chased by a flying blue wedge of law-enforcement officers, some on horseback. Seeing the site, I could well understand the emotions that the attack created in the reporters, who had been made to watch from a distance. These emotions they passed on to the nation, and they are what made Selma so important. King, like Gandhi, undoubtedly realized that nonviolent suffering exerts its redemptive power most effectively not on those with the nightsticks but on those at a slight remove—those in living rooms across America, say, close enough to feel (correctly) that their apathy contributed to this evil, yet far enough away not to be eaten up by hate and fear. The march to Montgomery changed America (largely as a result of it, the Voting Rights Act was passed within weeks), but it didn't necessarily change Selma. It offered the *chance* to change Selma. Through the Voting Rights Act, Selma's blacks earned the opportunity to take on bigotry at the polls instead of at the bridge—no more and no less. The hope—the gamble—was that the vote would be enough. The vote absolutely *had* to be enough, for if it wasn't—if cruelty and hate still ruled, and oppression continued unabated—our democracy meant much less than we thought it did. "If Negroes could vote, there would be no Jim Clarks," King, the majestic optimist, told an audience at Brown's Chapel several weeks before the bloody demonstration. "There would be no oppressive poverty directed against Negroes, our children would not be crippled by segregated schools, and the whole community might live together in harmony."



I spent the evening in Selma, and ate some excellent catfish—served me by a man who, I found out later, had run afoul of the federal government in the nineteen-sixties for his reluctance to serve his excellent catfish to black people. While I ate, I flipped through the Montgomery *Advertiser*. A front-page story told how the all-white Dallas County Commission, meeting at the county courthouse in Selma the day before, had voted to install Tommy Powell as tax collector. The job was open because Jacqueline Walker, elected the previous fall, had been killed in a car crash before she could take office. Mrs. Walker had been the first black elected to a county office since Reconstruction, when Benjamin Turner was also elected tax collector. Mr. Powell, named to fill the vacancy, was not only white; he was the man Mrs. Walker had beaten in the election—beaten *twice*, in fact, for Powell had run as a write-in candidate after his defeat in the Democratic primary. Dallas County black leaders, the paper reported, were tremendously angry—Mrs. Walker's husband, Nathaniel, said the action was "representative of the government of South Africa." I decided to call some people on both sides and see what they had to say.

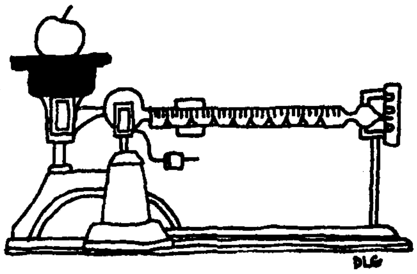
Rose Sanders is a black lawyer, and a friend of Mrs. Walker's. Two days after the commission vote, she helped chair a mass meeting at Brown's Chapel, where blacks formed a group called COPE—for Committee to Oust Political Enemies—and pledged to spend seventy-five thousand dollars defeating the commissioners who had supported Mr. Powell. The next morning, she and several other prominent blacks risked arrest by sitting in the seats of the county commissioners; they passed a symbolic resolution naming Mrs. Walker's husband as her successor. "This was the first time in a hundred years we'd elected a black," she told me when I talked to her, that afternoon. "We're fifty-two per cent of the population in Dallas County but not that much of the voting-age population, and no blacks get white votes. In Jackie's campaign, we worked kind of quietly, and we caught the white community a little off guard—she was not only the first black but also the first woman. We said a black should replace her. Putting in Powell was an openly racist decision. There was a strong sense of purpose at the courthouse, I think, about the need to perpetuate an all-white government. Blacks aren't even second-class citizens in Selma—they're more like third-class. And it is a poor commentary on the South, and on this entire country, that we still need to be doing sit-ins and boycotts and all that twenty years later."

Deans Barber, Jr., a county commissioner, seconded Powell's nomination for the vacancy. "He's been chief clerk in the tax office three years, and he's done a good job," he told me. "I never saw this as a racial, black-white issue, but, of course, there's no way I can please all the people; I try to act in the best interests of the community. I don't see our community as divided. Industry is very progressive, and there's a good working relationship. It's the news media that are making a to-do out of this—and those people who took over our chamber at the courthouse. They're a bunch of radicals, primarily."

J. L. Chestnut, Jr., one of the protesters who sat in the commissioners' chairs, heads Alabama's largest black law firm. "Commissioners are elected at large instead of by district in this county," he said. "At-large elections are an anachronism found mostly in Black Belt counties. This county has spent a fortune in legal fees—black folks' money as well as white folks'—fighting district representation. The county commissioners have been to the Supreme Court twice. At-large is definitely to their advantage; if it were by districts, there'd almost certainly be two black commissioners. I do not think black people will accept this insult—it cuts across the various factions in the black community. The appointment of a white person, after all we'd done to get Jackie elected—it's a slap in the face. And it will have a unifying effect."

Bill Kendrick, a cattle and corn farmer and county commissioner, voted for Powell. "The lines are drawn in this county, but the blacks want them more than the whites," he said. "The so-called black leaders who took our seats—I think it was just a gesture. I don't really think Dallas County is racially divided. But things get so wrought up, and the news is so slanted, it pits the black against the white. I've got a whole lot of black friends, though they don't vote for me, mostly."

Edwin Moss, a local black businessman and voter registrar, joined Mrs. Sanders and Mr. Chestnut in occupying the commissioners' chairs. "Why did all this happen?" he said to me. "It happened because we're living in Selma, Alabama, where whites feel that anything that has to be done has to be done by white people. Jackie Walker beat Powell in the primary and the general election. When, by an act of God, she was killed, we went to the commissioners and said, 'Appoint her husband.' They'd done that in similar cases in the past. And if you can't appoint her husband, we told them, we'd appreciate your appointing any black person of your choosing. The commissioners knew there'd be some protest when they named Powell, but I think they felt they had to satisfy their constituency. And they don't call us their constituency."



Does all this indicate—for it is quite clear to me who the democrats are in this story, and who the radicals—that democracy has failed Selma's blacks? Does it demonstrate that the vote is insufficient where hatred is so deep that it will unite—it will clot—around any white-skinned person against any black? Or does it show that, at least in this county where blacks may cast half the votes, each obstacle will eventually be overcome and compromise someday result, that Jackie Walker will be the first of many and Dr. King's long-delayed promise will start to come true? It is difficult to tell at a distance; political landscapes are harder for an outsider to read than the topography of physical battlefields. What did seem certain to me, and magnificent, was that the courage that allowed people to climb the steep bridge across the Alabama River did not leave Dallas County along with the reporters and the celebrities and the friendly white people from up North, nor did it slip away with the disappointments of the last two decades. The civil-rights movement is still needed (as if Bedford-Stuyvesant didn't make that plain), and the civil-rights movement is still on. Twenty years later, people are still striding purposefully uphill.

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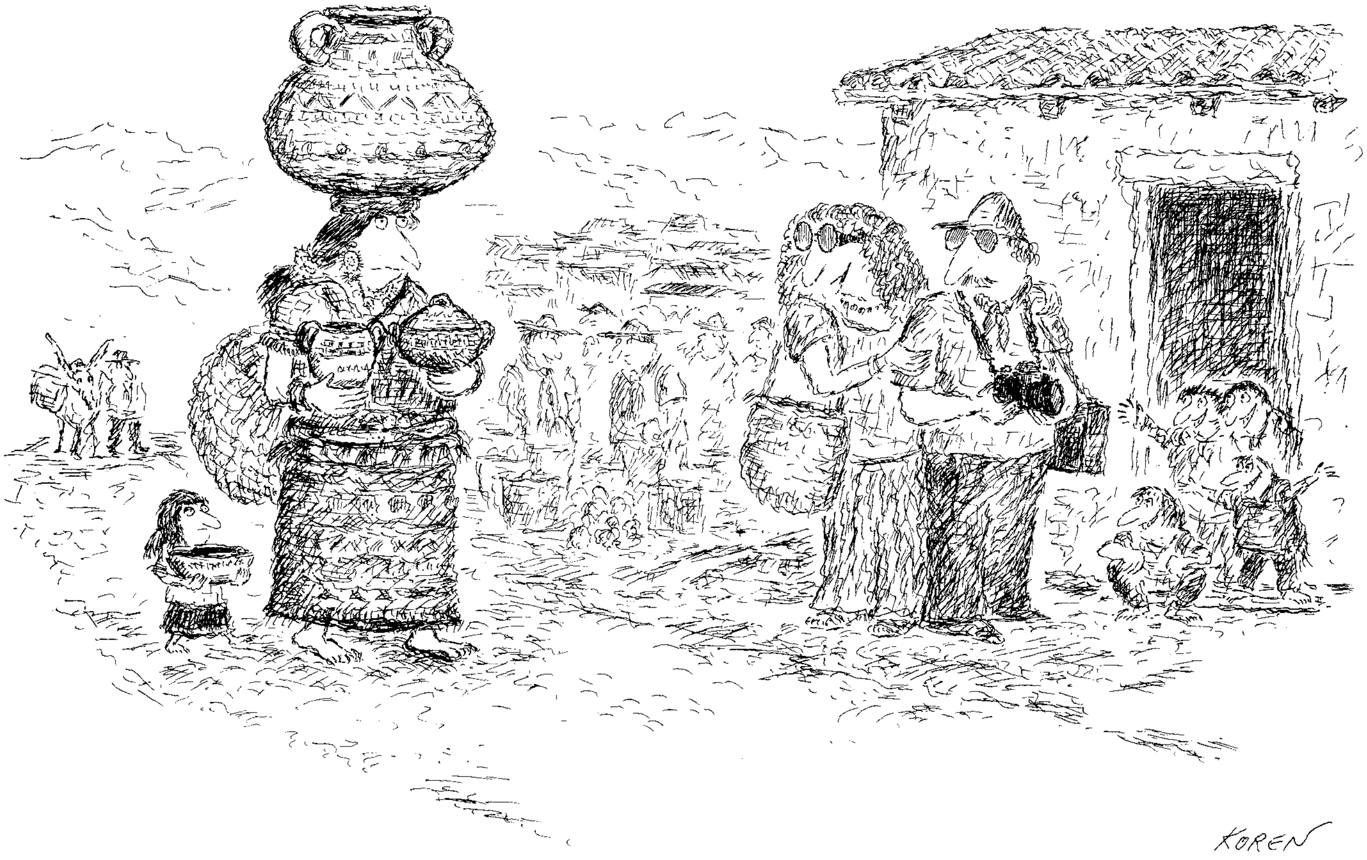
Waltzing

MAN (looking at a pretty, dark-haired woman wearing a yellow off-the-shoulder Scarlett O'Hara dress with petal-trimmed sleeves and an enormous bell-shaped skirt): "How do you get something like that into a closet?"

Woman (loftily): "Harry, ball gowns are like yachts. If you have to



"Quick, Jonathan—a local craftsperson."

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ask a question like that, you shouldn't own one."

We overheard this exchange while we were standing in the enormous Grand Promenade of Avery Fisher Hall, sipping Mumm's and absorbing waves of diverse perfumes and visions of fin-de-siècle elegance as they emerged from the escalator with mechanical regularity. The occasion was the Philharmonic Ball, an event that was held to raise funds for the orchestra. It took the form of an elaborate Viennese evening (at five hundred dollars a ticket) that consisted of a reception (wall-to-wall Philharmonic patrons, all of whom seemed to be kissing one another), a dinner (salmon, trout mousse, roast loin of veal, and *Windtorte*), entertainment (some young Joffrey Ballet School dancers whirling about to "Voices of Spring"), and, as the pièce de résistance, the enthralling spectacle of the New York Philharmonic—that grumpily independent group of hardheaded musicians—acting as a house band for an evening of dancing. Male patrons wore white tie and tails ("Rental agencies were swamped," said a Philharmonic official, "because this is basically a tuxedo town"), and the ladies wore ball gowns ranging from slim, beaded numbers that looked difficult even to walk in ("This is by Fabrice," said Mrs. James Crystal, who was dressed in a slender column of white silk embroidered with crystal beads. "I *know* I can waltz in it, because my husband and I have *practiced*") to billowing creations of tulle, organza, and lace. There were lots of long white gloves ("You couldn't buy a pair in New York," said Mrs. Robert Garrett, one of the chairwomen. "People had to beg, borrow, or steal them, and anybody who had a débutante daughter wasn't safe"), acres of pearls and diamonds, and quite a few trains, some of which were stepped on during the dancing. Wandering through the crowd, we spotted the Mehtas, Zubin wearing tails and the Padma Bhushan, an Indian decoration awarded for distinguished service in the arts, and Nancy in a pink organza Oscar de la Renta; the actress Glenn Close, in an Edwardian-looking gown of pale-yellow silk taffeta; Ann Getty, in a black-and-white Dior with a wide diamond belt that attracted a lot of attention; Leona Helmsley (with a speechless Harry in tow), sporting a diamond tiara and a full-skirted gown of pink-green-and-lilac silk organza; and Pauline Trigère, looking elegant in her usual dark glasses and a black-and-bronze Trigère.

At seven-thirty, everybody trooped across the plaza beneath a plastic canopy leading to a big white tent in Damrosch Park, which had been decorated with vertical green trellises (to conceal the tent poles) and great looped garlands of green leaves and spring flowers. In the center of the tent was a dance floor, and the Philharmonic played on a stage to one side. Waltzing began with "Voices of Spring" and ended, almost two hours later, with the "Emperor Waltz." In between, there were some spirited polkas and galops, which cleared the floor of all but the hardiest of dancers. "If I did this every night, I wouldn't need the gym," said a perspiring man conducting his partner to their table. The happiest man at the party seemed to be Amyas Ames, a tall, thin, white-haired retired banker, who is a former chairman of both the Philharmonic and Lincoln Center. Mr. Ames circled the dance floor with partner after partner, throwing himself into the intricate waltz steps with the skill of a professional and the enthusiasm of an adolescent.

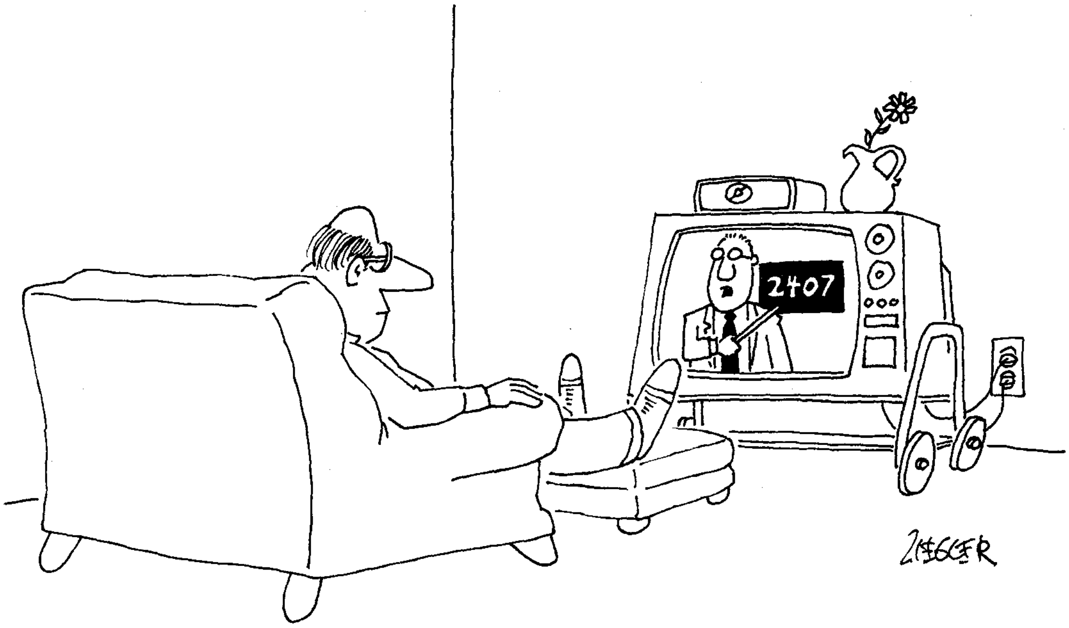
When the Philharmonic had finished a set, we fell into conversation with Walter Rosenberger, the orchestra's principal percussionist, who told us that his colleagues were really enjoying themselves. "It's wonderful, because we're playing for the people who have been working for us," he said. "And we were well rehearsed. There are some tricky ritards and repeats in this music. For the dancing, Mehta keeps it simple, but where they're just supposed to listen he uses the Viennese style of the fast second beat—a little syncopation instead of playing it straight. You can't write this beat down—you just have to *feel* it collectively. But that's what makes waltz music interesting."

Transplant

NEWSPAPERMEN have a sense of place rivalled only by that of cops. Their life, day after day, introduces them to, and eventually instills in them, the peculiar rhythms of whatever city they cover. They know its leaders, and they know which leader owes which other leader what, and for what; they know its streets so well that they can hear a crackly report on the police scanner and be on the 1100 block of Lincoln Street before the brawl breaks up; most of all, they know their city's outlook, and can sense its mood the way a clam senses the incoming tide. Pick up a newspaperman from his own city and plop him down in another and he will frequently feel a little off, like a ballerina at a disco or a Greyhound regular on T.W.A.: Who is that lady with the peanuts? All of which is to say we were relieved last week when we visited an old friend, Thomas Winship, and found him thriving. "I quit the Boston *Globe* on December 31st, after twenty glorious, exhilarating years as editor, and on January 1st moved to New York and began my second career, which is going to be a hell of a lot more challenging," he told us. Winship plans to start a center for training Third World journalists in Reston, Virginia. He is spending this year, though, as a fellow at Columbia's Gannett Center for Media Studies, with the purpose of planning and raising funds for the Virginia project. "I'm having fun getting over being afraid of New York," he said. "I'm as much of a Boston champion as you could find, and though I've been in and out of New York all my life it's always been on quick hits. I didn't think I had any friends here. I never even rode the subway. But three months' experience has given the lie to every preconception. I've learned that the fastest way to get around is by subway—the noisiest and the dirtiest but the most efficient. I've found I have hundreds of friends here. I've been walking the neighborhoods, just looking; and cabdrivers are just as friendly as in Boston, where they were always my best friends."

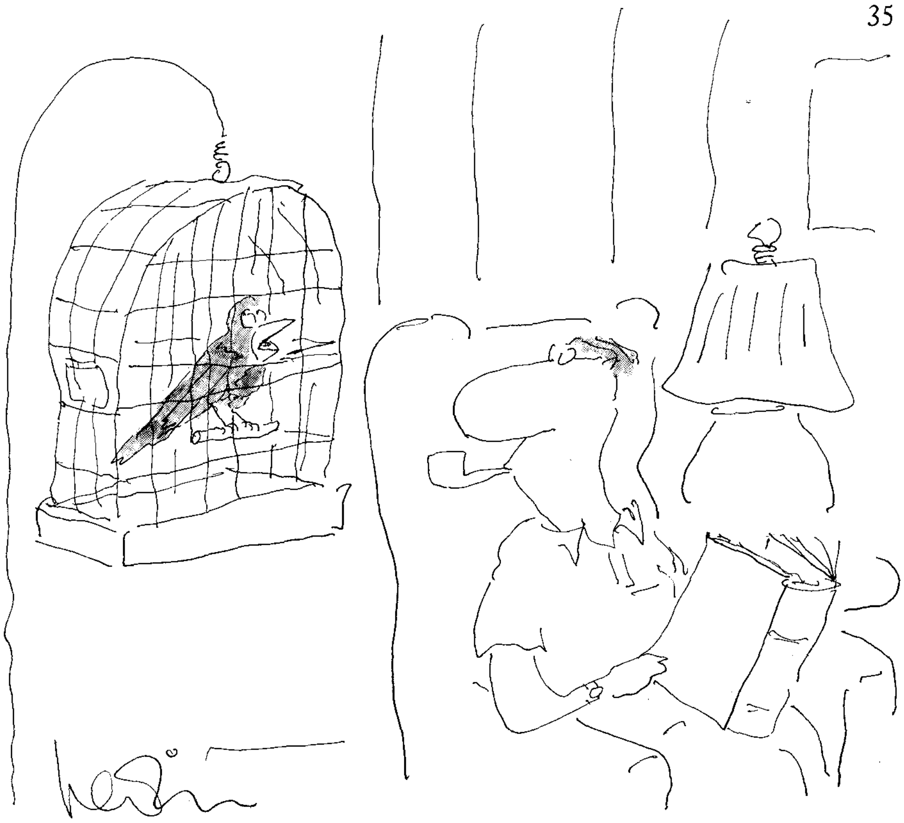
Winship's New York education has been interrupted several times by journeys abroad. "I've started reading Third World newspapers, and they just aren't doing a very good job of outlining the crisis," he said. "Partly, it's because of government control, but there's a lot of room for improvement even within those strictures. I've been to Africa twice and talked with all sorts of reporters—there are alert young journalists and editors crying out for some help, even with the most elementary things, like headline writing." His center will give foreign journalists a week or more of intensive practical training. "I was in Dakar—God, it was depressing," said Winship, a man who took a newspaper that still ran advertisements on the front page and guided it to twelve Pulitzers. "These winter winds were blowing sand so hard you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. The deserts are growing there every year, and the newspapers are full of stories about government officials visiting foreign countries." One reason Winship wants to work with Third World journalists is that he is, he says, "an inveterate peacenik, a guy who believes better communication might be the last, best hope for keeping this planet from blowing up." But there's also the fact that he can't abide bad newspapers. It is clear that he would have liked to walk into the Dakar *News*, grab some young reporter, and growl at him to get the damn sand story: Where is the stuff coming from? What's being done? What can stop it?

Winship introduced us to his wife, Elizabeth, who writes the syndicated advice column for teen-agers "Ask Beth." (If they awarded Pulitzers for good sense and stable judgment, she would win one every year.) Mrs. Winship had a stack of mail to answer, so her husband suggested that we go out for lunch. He spent the meal reminiscing about his years at the *Globe*. "Sometimes I sound gloomy about the future—especially about the nuclear business—but I'm really a happy optimist, so impressed with the way we do things in this country," he said. "I've been on the firing line for five revolutions—the civil-rights movement, the student revolt (in my opinion, by the way, the contribution of the kids in the sixties is way underrated; they forced frank talk about family relationships, about hypocrisy),



"Today's number is two thousand four hundred and seven. That's sixteen above normal for this date and thirty-eight ahead of last month at this time."

the revolution to stop a war, that great testing of our country during the Watergate chapter, and the women's movement. All represent signs of progress, of hope. The country is still developing, still progressing. Not that it's been easy. The high point of my journalistic career was probably the Vietnam period—our paper got onto the issue very early, and did very creative coverage of it. Every week, we printed the bombing totals by country, and we ran the casualty figures on the front page. We were one of three papers to get that charming phone call from John Mitchell, the Attorney General, about printing the Pentagon papers. 'Good morning, Tom,' he said to me—I'd never met the guy in my life. 'I respectfully ask that you stop publishing those documents.' I said, 'I respectfully have to decline.' He said, 'We'll see you in court.' He did, and, of course, we eventually won. That was fun."



"*Tweet, tweet . . . something, something, something . . . tweet, tweet.*"

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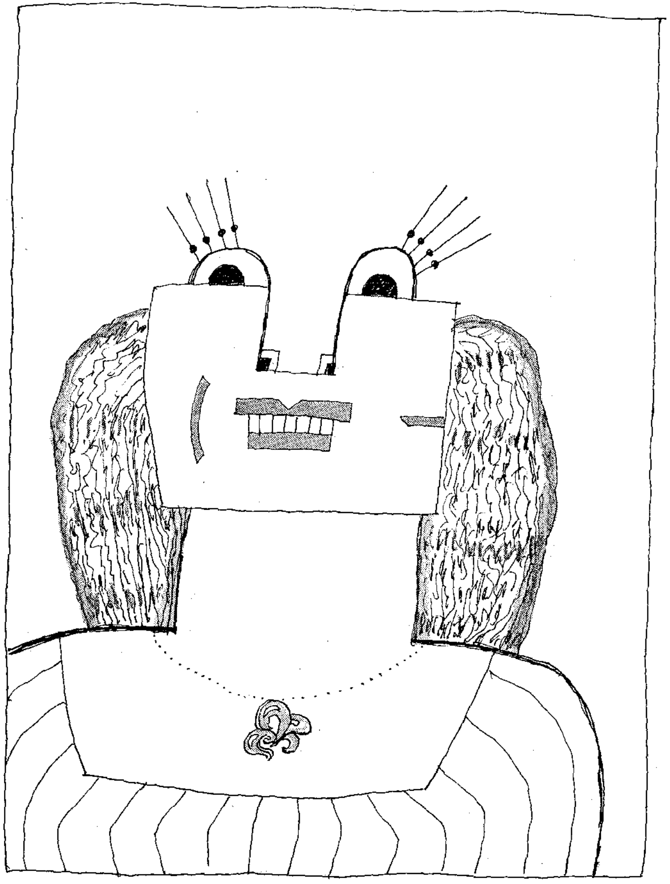
Buoyant

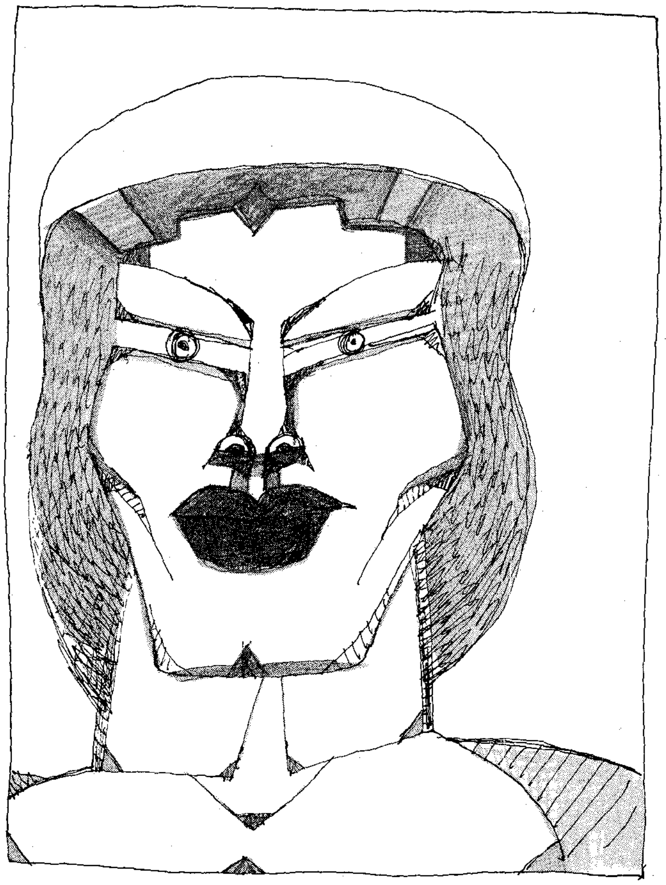
"THERE'S this guy I know who owns an orchid farm on Long Island," Michael Hutchison told us one morning last week. "He wanted to buy a windmill, but there were ten or twelve different models on the market. And each had its good points and its bad points, but in different areas. It would have taken a computer to figure it out. And then he went for a float, and the answer was suddenly very clear in his mind."

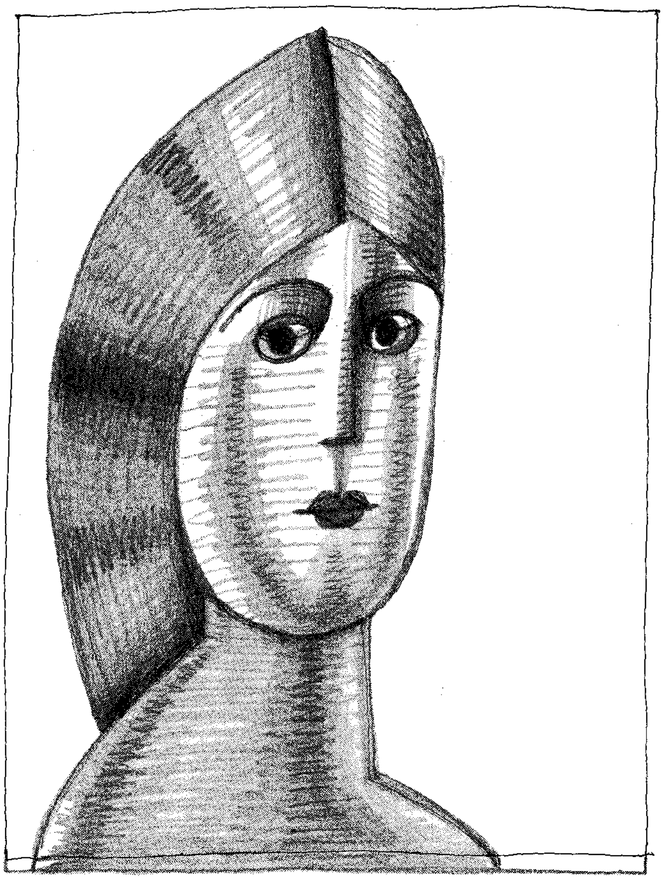
Mr. Hutchison is the king of floating on your back in the dark in ten inches of water saturated with Epsom salts. He wrote the book on floating—"The Book of Floating," he called it. It actually came out a year ago, when flotation centers—commercial operations with a number of the sensory-deprivation tanks available for use by the hour—were opening across the country. But our theory is you can get cut up pretty bad out on the cutting edge. We waited until this spring, when "The Book of Floating" was reissued, before deciding to get our feet wet and salty. Mr. Hutchison, who has gone on to write a book called "Megabrain," about gadgets like the Graham Potentializer (a cot that revolves through an electromagnetic field, subtly elating its rider), assured us that no one had ever perished in a tank. In fact, he said, he had just returned from a New Orleans conference where scientists credited floating with everything from pain reduction to improved athletic performance. "Floating is the mental equivalent of working out on a Nautilus machine," he said. "Pretty soon, people are going to be coming up to you at parties and instead of saying 'I jogged six miles' they'll be saying 'I improved my neuro-efficiency quotient twenty per cent.' I mean, why have this sleek body if you have a sludge-encrusted brain?"

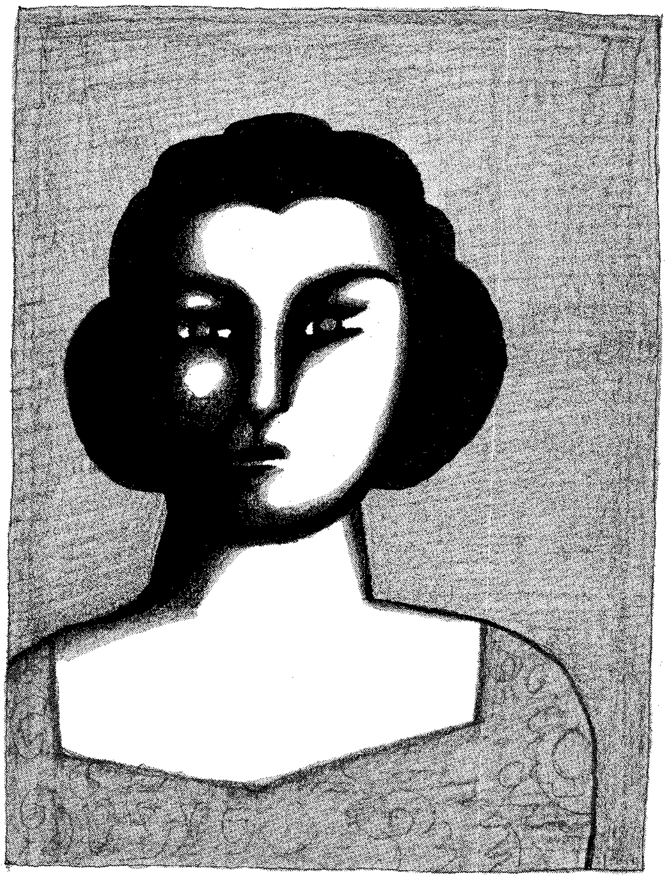
We set off for Tranquility Center, a midtown float house, remembering what Mr. Hutchison had written about his first time: "My memory tossed up odd chunks—childhood scenes, vivid but fragmentary—which merged with familiar faces speaking to me, bright fantasies, shorthand thought notation that passed for ideas." We settled down in Tranquility's Theta room, an open flotation unit. We turned off all the lights, stretched out in the nearly body-temperature water, and relaxed. For a moment, we were alone in the total blackness, but soon Paul Volcker, chief of the Federal Reserve, joined us. "You can call it the Fed," he said, or seemed to say—perhaps Paul Volcker can project his thoughts into other people's brains. He explained the need for a reasonably restrictive monetary policy, but when we asked him—politely—if he'd extinguish his cigar (it seemed out of sympathy with the floating ethos) he snarled and vanished, to be replaced by a group of first- and second-term Republican congressmen. They seemed angry upstarts, not content to play by the staid, time-honored rules of the lower chamber. They excoriated Mr. Volcker for slowing economic recovery, though they said last month's decision to reduce the discount rate was a step in the right direction. Some representative Americans must have come in behind the congressmen—they said they were confused by this chatter and didn't want to hear any more of it, and we agreed. For a while, we lay there in the warm void, and then we carelessly got some Epsom salts in our eyes and had to jump out and rinse. By the time we resumed floating, several pop musicians had entered the water. They asked if we'd join them in singing a song. "I'm going back to acoustic guitar for this gig, because salt water always shorts out my amp," Dylan said. "Acoustic guitar is for geeks," chorused the members of Styx. They splashed some Epsom salts in each other's eyes, and the whole business degenerated from there. Then some scenes from our childhood flashed by, but we didn't dwell on them. Pretty soon, our hour was up. We emerged relaxed, confident that we knew the right windmill for us, and eager to float again.

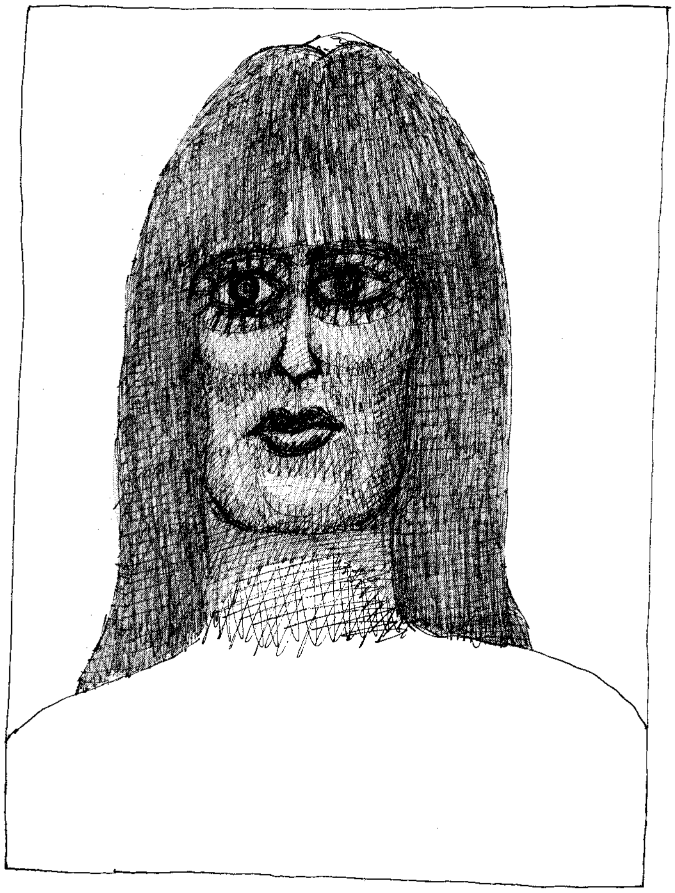
WOMEN

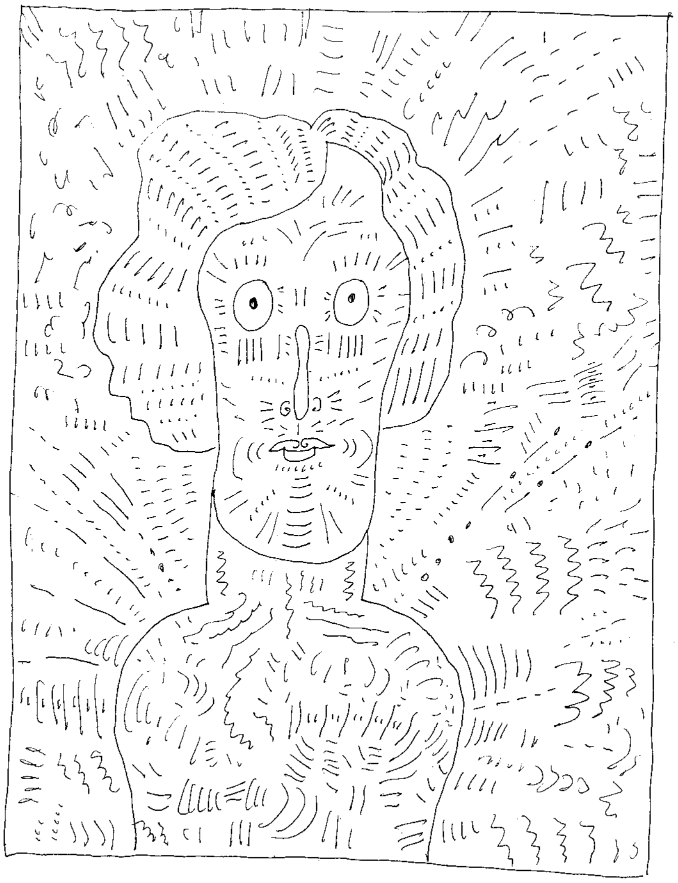


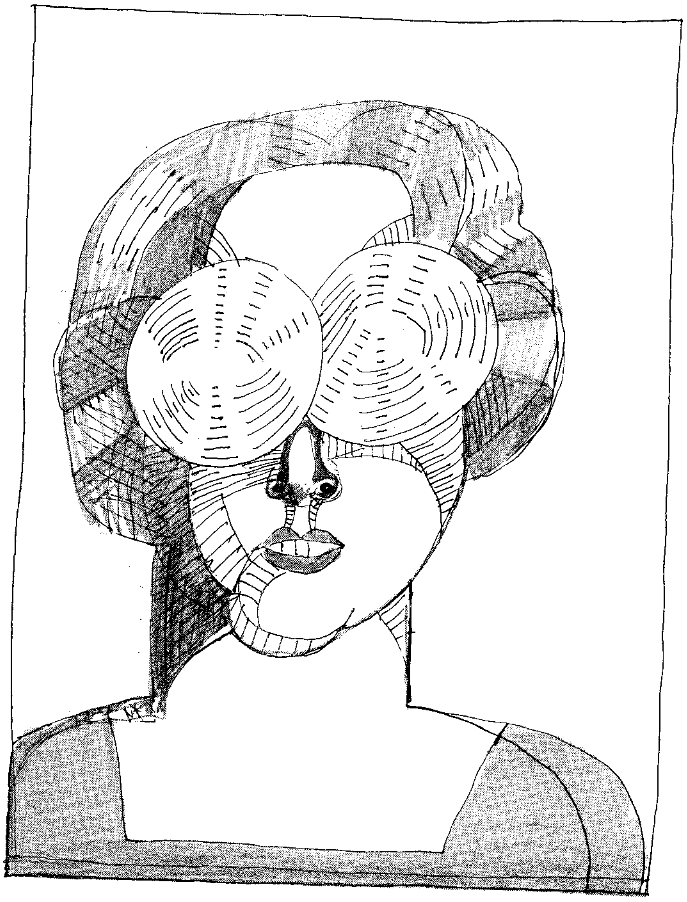


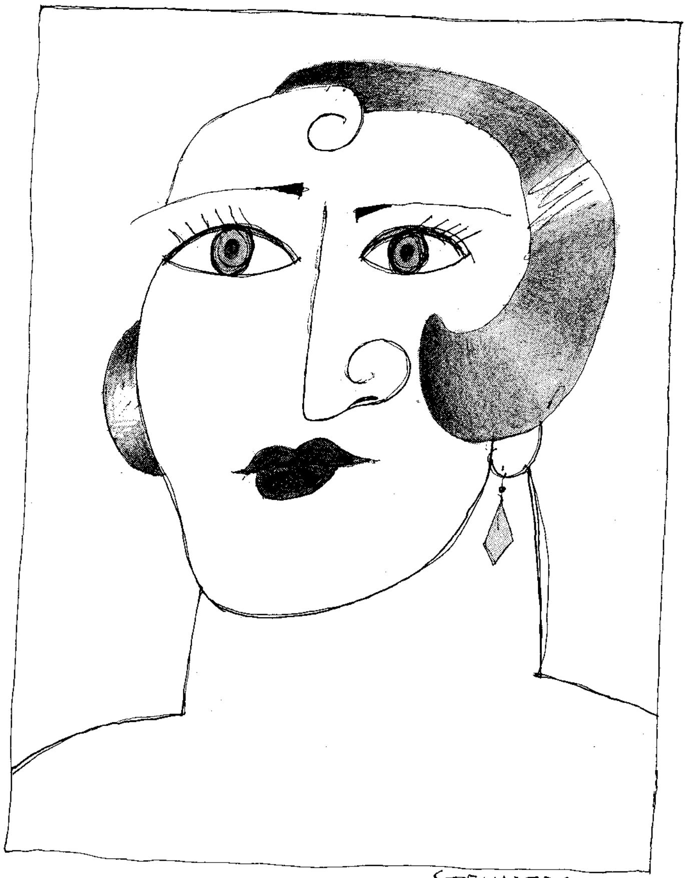












STEINBERG

IN COUNTRY

Cawood's Pond was Sam Hughes' favorite place to go parking with her boyfriend, Lonnie Malone. It wasn't really a pond but a snake-infested swamp with sinkholes. Sam had even heard there were alligators there. Emmett, her uncle, used to go there when he was a boy, but he stopped going. Sam was surprised when he suggested that the three of them drive out there now, in the middle of the night.

"I ain't scared," Emmett said. "Let's go. I might even have some sweet stuff around here somewhere." He took a cocoa-mix can from a kitchen cabinet. "Ah-ha!" he said, looking inside; it was where he kept his pot.

Emmett found a sweatshirt and sniffed the armpits before pulling it over his head. He touched his face. He had a pimple about to pop. He was thirty-five years old and suddenly had pimples. Sam was dying to squeeze them, but he wouldn't let her.

"Don't let Moon Pie out," Emmett said, as they left the house. "At night is when cats get run over. Headlights confuse them."

The rain had stopped and street lights were shining in new puddles. Sam soaked both running shoes. They had been drinking beer and she felt drunk on it. She lay down on the mattress in the back of Lonnie's van, and Lonnie and Emmett sat up front. She bounced along on the mattress, feeling like a soldier in an armored personnel carrier, because she couldn't see where they were going. Emmett had once told her how claustrophobic those vehicles were, with a dozen guys packed together on benches, their rifles poking each other, and one guy in a tiny cubbyhole driving, with only a periscope to see his way. It was like being in a submarine, Emmett had said.

Emmett, her mother's brother, had lived with Sam and her mother ever since he came back from Vietnam. Sam's father didn't come back. He was killed in Vietnam before Sam was born. Last year, her mother, Irene, had married again and moved away to Lexington, but Sam stayed behind to finish high school. Now Sam had graduated and Irene had a baby. She wanted Sam to move to Lexington and enroll at the University of Kentucky, but Sam wanted to stay in Hopewell. She felt she couldn't leave Emmett.

"There's a bulldozer over yonder," Emmett said when they reached the gravel road that led to the pond. "They're draining the swamp and rerouting the creek. The biologists are going crazy. They say it'll starve out the snakes, and birds won't land."

"I can do without the snakes," said Sam.

Cawood's Pond was named for a notorious outlaw, Andrew Cawood, who had once hidden out here and was believed to have fallen into a sinkhole. The university biologists had cleared a place for cars to park and built a boardwalk that looped out over the swamp. Sam and Lonnie had spent the night out here in the van a couple of times.

"The insects are having a conversation," said Emmett. "They're talking about me. I know 'cause my ears are burning."

When Lonnie turned the lights off, and they sat there in the silence, they saw how the swampy woods made a black rim around the gravelled clearing.

Emmett and Lonnie climbed over the seat of the van and sat down in back with Sam. Emmett pulled his sweet stuff from his cigarette pack. He lit a joint and passed it to Lonnie. The night was pleasant after the rain, and now and then a little breeze stirred and they could hear drops of water shaking from the leaves of the trees.

"Where are all the birds, Emmett?" Sam asked.

"They sleep at night. Except owls."

"Where do birds sleep, Emmett?" asked Lonnie, with a giggle.

"In bird beds."

"Hey, tell about that bird you're always looking for," Sam said. "Maybe there's one here right now."

ICE CREAM
STEVENSON

"You couldn't see it at night."

"If it's white, wouldn't it look like a ghost?"

"What kind of bird is it?" Lonnie asked.

Emmett hesitated before answering. "An egret."

"What are egrets like?" Sam asked. "Are you sure they're around here?"

Emmett drank some beer. "I believe egrets are the state bird of Florida." He took the joint Lonnie passed him and puffed it.

Sam said to Lonnie, "This was a bird he used to see in Vietnam."

"Really?"

Emmett exhaled slowly. "Yeah. You'd see it in the rice paddies, dipping its head down in the water, feeling around for things to eat. It's a wader."

"They might be here, then," Lonnie said. "In a swamp like this."

"Why do you want to see that bird so bad?" Sam asked cautiously.

"It was so pretty. It was the prettiest bird I ever saw, all white and long-legged." Emmett worked at the tab on the beer can. "They're like cowbirds, but cowbirds aren't pretty. Sometimes you'd see these water buffalo and every one of them would have one of these birds sitting beside it, like a little pet."

"Why did they do that?" Lonnie asked.

"The bird would eat things the water buffalo turned up, and it would pick ticks off the buffalo's head. Sometimes you'd see the bird setting on the buffalo's back. He didn't care."

"Won't it bring back bad memories if you see a bird like that again?" Sam asked.

"No. That was a good memory. The only one. That beautiful bird just going about its business with all that crazy stuff going on around it. Whole flocks of them would fly over. They fold their long necks up when they fly." Emmett rolled the beer can in his palms, and the aluminum crinkled. He said, "Once, a grenade hit close to some trees and there were these birds taking off like quail, ever' which way. We thought it was snowing up instead of down."

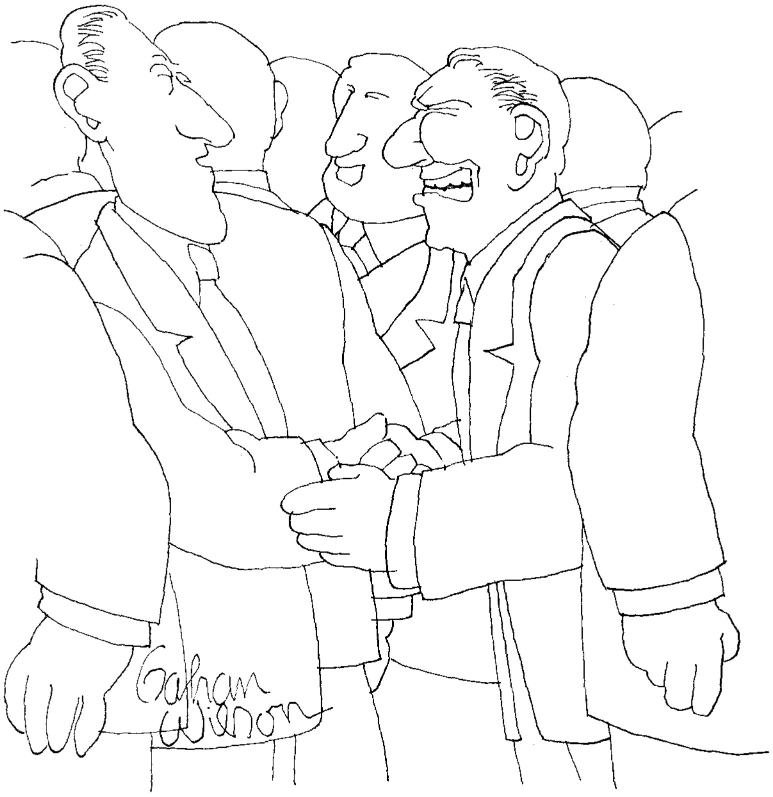
"Did you see a lot of action like that over there?" Lonnie asked.

"Some. I nearly got my ass killed once or twice."

"How?"

"Oh, you don't want to know."

Sam passed Lonnie the joint. She exhaled and coughed. She could al-



"I'm glad to meet you, too—but not, I'm afraid, quite as glad."

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most see that bird. She felt peaceful, but her head was spinning with thoughts about Emmett. He hadn't said this much about Vietnam in years. Watching "M*A*S*H" so much must be bringing it out, she thought. Emmett used to have a girlfriend, Anita Stevens, but he had broken up with her at Christmas. He never said why. He took her out for Shrimp Night at the Holiday Inn and gave her a fancy cheese basket from the Party Mart in Paducah. Anita playfully called it her Easter basket and asked Emmett where the sweet stuff was. The basket had so much cheese and salami in it she probably still had some in her refrigerator.

"Hey, Emmett," Sam blurted out. "I wish we had Anita with us. Why don't you call her up?"

"Sure. Hand me the phone."

"I'm serious. Why don't you call her up tomorrow?"

"Anita doesn't want a bird-watcher," Emmett said flatly. He sat propped against the spare tire in the back of the van. The glow from his cigarette reminded Sam of Mars, the way it popped out in the summer sky, burning bright orange, seeming to move toward the earth.

Lonnie turned on the radio and Bruce Springsteen yelled out, "I'm a cool rocking Daddy in the U.S.A.!" It was from his new album. For a while, they sang along with the songs on the university FM station, Rock-95. Sam watched the moon inch from behind the broken clouds. The night was clearing, and the radio was playing "Ain't Gonna Bump No More with No Big Fat Woman," a song Emmett loved. Anita wasn't a big fat woman. She was pretty, and Sam was sure Anita still cared about Emmett. Sam felt Lonnie pulling at her, wanting to smooch with her, but her mind was whirling around in the darkness and she couldn't catch it.

Emmett and Lonnie went outside, and Sam lost track of time. Maybe she dozed off. She felt afraid. With the moon out, this was a perfect setting for a horror movie. Gradually, she became aware of a familiar yet strange sound on the radio. It was a song by the Beatles, but it was not a song she knew. Sam thought she knew every one of their songs, because her mother owned all their records. She had left them with Sam when she moved to Lexington. "You better leave my kitten all alone," they were singing. How could the Beatles have a new record, she wondered groggily.

"OW, that hurts!"

"Sorry. Hold still just a minute, Sam," Dawn said. "Let me hold that ice on your ear a minute longer. I must not have it numb enough."

Dawn held the plastic bag of crushed ice on Sam's earlobe.

"If I get frostbite and my ear rots off, I'll sue you."

"Hold still. They wouldn't do this for you at the shopping center," Dawn said. "They'd just drive that post right through your ear without any deadening. There! I got you by surprise, didn't I?"

"It didn't really hurt that much. It was O.K." Sam shivered. Her ear was stinging.

Her friend Dawn Goodwin had pierced Sam's ears last year, and now she was making another set of holes so Sam could wear two pairs of earrings. Dawn had four holes in each ear. Her earrings made an outline of her earlobe, like studs on a belt. Sam and Lonnie used to run around with Dawn and Dawn's boyfriend Scott before she split up with Scott and started going with Ken Williamson. Lonnie and Ken didn't get along, so they didn't double-date much. Dawn was very pretty, but she always insisted Sam was prettier. Sam didn't think so—her face was too round and she had buckteeth, sort of.

"They won't do the fourth one at the shopping center," Dawn said. "They're afraid of getting into cartilage. You can't even get a nurse at the hospital to do it. But I'm lucky to have plenty of flesh there. The only time I got infected was the first time, when I had it done at the shopping center. But I didn't dab alcohol on three times a day like you're supposed to. How's that other one feel?"

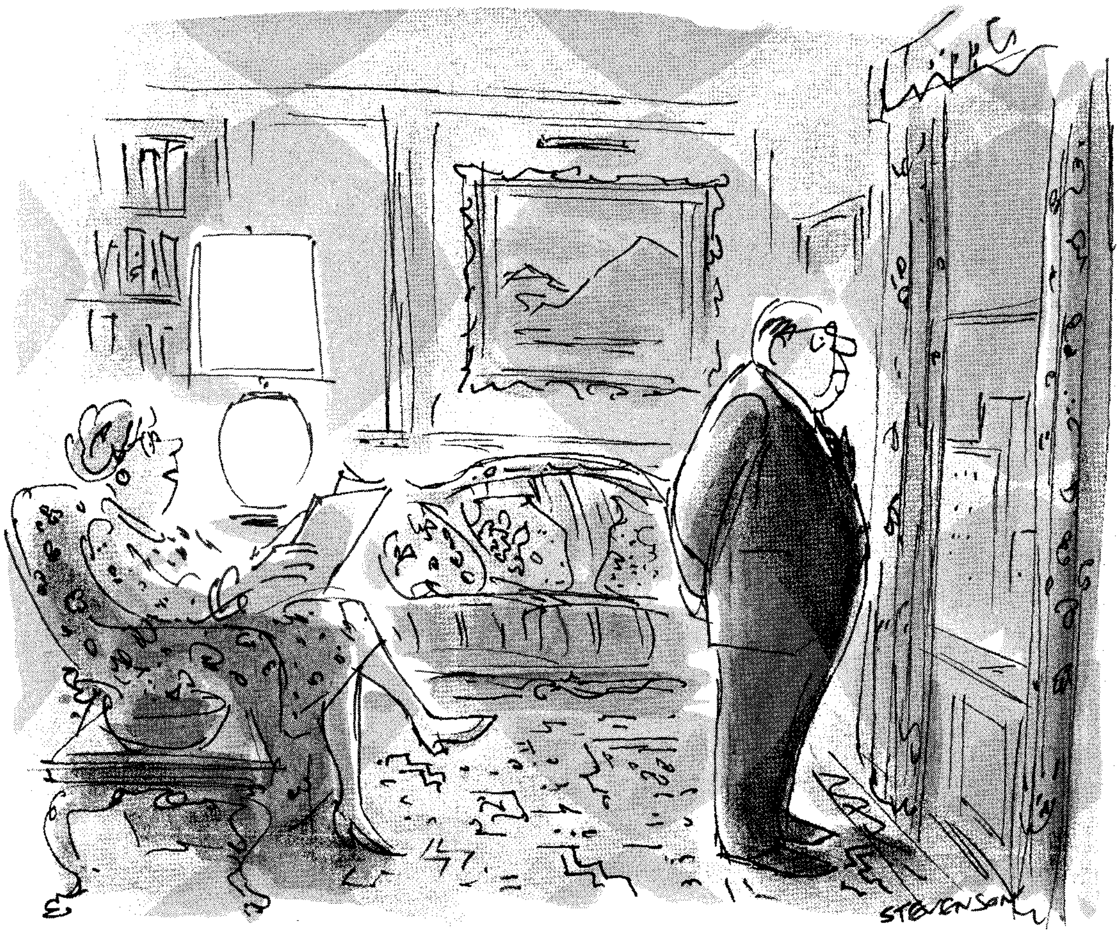
"O.K." Sam was relieved that the other needle had gone in so easily. "My ears are blood red," she said, giggling at herself in the mirror. Her round face was like Emmett's and her mother Irene's. Her hair was short, the color of penny loafers.

"You've got big lobes," Dawn said. "You could handle four holes easy."

Dawn lived in a creaky old house, shabbier than Sam's house, but Dawn had a large bedroom with delicate gold-and-blue flowered wallpaper and a skirt on her dressing table.

"Now, if you do it right, there won't be any trouble," Dawn said. "Keep those posts in and dab them with alcohol three times a day for two weeks. And don't forget to turn the studs."

"I'm going to wear one long and one short," Sam said, admiring her ears in the mirror. "I've got some swords two inches long I'll wear in



"Why can't you be like Malcolm Forbes and have fun all the time?"

• •

the bottom holes, and I'll put little stars in the new holes."

Dawn had on hearts, diamonds, spades, and clubs of different sizes and styles. The spades were black enamel, and the clubs were long, dangling rhinestones. The diamonds were gold wire, and the hearts were tiny studs. Dawn had such an original earring collection. She had about fifty pairs, silver and gold and cloisonné. Sam liked Dawn's earrings.

Dawn said, "What's really fun is to take some old beads and string them so they're about three-inch loops or strings and wear them. They sort of blend with your hair, and you can even chew on them, if you feel like it. Here, let me give you these earrings I got at the crafts fair at the lake last year. They're made out of horseshoe nails." She plucked the earrings from her jewelry box. "I used to love these, but I'm bored with them now." She laughed. "I get bored easy, so when I get bored I just stick another needle in my ear."

"Oh, thanks." Sam tucked the earrings in her purse.

"You remember that boy that got thrown out of school for wearing that sleeveless T-shirt?"

"Yeah." Sam laughed. "It was too punk for Hopewell."

"I heard he had his nipple pierced, and he wears a little gold circle in it."

"Ouch!"

"I don't like that guy. He's a real space cadet. He was toking behind the Burger Boy and he starts coming on to me. I don't even know what that *means*. I was sure he was gay. I know I'm bad, but he's weird." Together, they looked at their faces in the mirror and giggled. Dawn was taller than Sam. "We're the baddest girls in Hopewell."

"My uncle lets me do anything I want to. He doesn't even care if I sleep with Lonnie. Lonnie stayed over three nights since he quit his job."

"Daddy would kill me if he knew I did anything like that." Dawn tossed the sodden cotton balls in the wastebasket. "Come on, I've got to clean up the kitchen before he comes home. If it's still a mess when he gets back, he'll give me a lot of crap. But if I'm not here, he'll think it's my day to work."

Dawn worked at the Burger Boy. Sam was looking forward to going back to work there, so she could be around Dawn. Dawn's father operated a dough machine at the cookie factory, and her mother was dead. Only one of her four brothers still lived at home. Both Sam and Dawn lived with no other women in the house. It was unusual, they realized. It gave them some kind of independence, but Dawn was much more domestic than Sam, and she was a good cook.

Downstairs, while they washed dishes, Sam confided her worries about what might be causing Emmett's pimples. Dawn was shocked. "Girl! You don't mean it!" She had never heard of Agent Orange. "You mean it could turn up after all these years?"

"It causes all kinds of problems. I read about it in a library book. If these guys were exposed and they have kids, their kids have birth defects."

"Maybe that's why your uncle never married. Maybe he knew all along what would happen after Vietnam."

"Maybe. But they didn't figure out what Agent Orange could do until not long ago." Sam dried the glasses. All the glasses were giveaways from fast-food places.

Dawn said, "My cousin was in Vietnam, but you'd never know it. He's just like anybody else. He does shift work at Union Carbide. What can you do about this orange stuff?"

"I don't know. Emmett's got a pain in his head that scares me. Every now and then you see him jerk and twitch his forehead, and you know that pain's passing through. It's not enough to take an aspirin. It's sort of like having a hangnail, but I'm afraid it could be a brain tumor."

Dawn attacked a skillet with a rusty patch of Brillo. "I knew a boy who had a brain tumor," she said. "It was in Bowling Green, where my aunt lives and I spent the summer once. This boy used to come to the swimming pool, and he was cute. It killed me what happened to him. And I knew this other boy who *said* he had a brain tumor and only had two years to live. But he was lying. He was trying to impress me."

"Which do you think would be worse—to die from a brain tumor or be killed in a war?"

Dawn kept scrubbing the skillet, in thought. "I don't know. Sometimes I think it must be better to die all of a sudden. My mom just lingered on, and they said it was awful. I was too little to remember."

When she finished the skillet, Dawn took a quart of Coke from the refrigerator and got out some ice. Dawn's refrigerator was small and old-fashioned, with one of those freezers that didn't have a separate door. In the living room, they drank the Cokes, and Sam flipped through some old records Dawn's brothers had left—Willie Nelson, Christopher Cross, Elton John: singers Sam hated.

"I wish I could buy that new Springsteen album," Sam said. "But I have to save all my money for a car."

"I hear that on the radio all the time at the Burger Boy."

"Did you know the title song's about a vet?"

" 'Born in the U.S.A.'?"

"Yeah. In the song, his brother gets killed over there, and then the guy gets in a lot of trouble when he gets back home. He can't get a job, and he ends up in jail. It's a great song."

"I like that one about the car wash—where it rains all the time and he lost his job and his girlfriend. That's the saddest song. That song really scares me." Dawn shuddered and rattled ice in her glass. "My brother took all my records," she said. "He stole the stereo I had in my room, and my radio blew up."

"I've been listening to my mother's old records," said Sam. "She's off in Lexington having a good time, and she doesn't seem worried about Emmett. That really gripes my soul."

"Do you still miss your mother?"

Sam fingered the new studs in her ears. "Yeah. I remember on Saturday nights, years ago, we used to watch TV. She'd pop popcorn and her and Emmett and me would watch about three hours of comedy shows, one right after the other. First there was 'All in the Family,' then 'M*A*S*H,' then Mary Tyler Moore, then Bob Newhart, and after that Carol Burnett was on for an hour. It was incredible. But the shows changed, and then when Lorenzo Jones started coming over a couple of years ago he'd talk when we tried to watch television together." Sam's mother had married Larry Joiner. Sam called him Lorenzo Jones, after an old radio soap opera she had heard of. Irene's life was a soap opera, Sam thought. She said to Dawn, "He'd talk during the news too and tell his opinion on world affairs so you couldn't hear the news."

"I've got a brother like that."

"I wish you and me could do something real wild," Sam said. "We could go get jobs in Florida or somewhere and go to the beach every day. Wouldn't that be fun? We could work at Disney World."

"Lonnie and Ken would like that a lot if we went off and left them!"

"What I want is money," Sam said. "I need an awful lot of money."

"Well, you won't get it at the Burger Boy."

"I can't figure out what to do!" Sam cried. "I could go to U.K. But Emmett's depending on me, and then there's Lonnie. I think he wants to get married when he gets a job."

"And have babies."

"Not with the pill. You know, when Mom got pregnant last year she ran me right off to the doctor and got birth-control pills for me. She didn't even ask me."

"Aren't you afraid to take those things?" asked Dawn. "I'd be afraid of side effects."

"I don't care. Having a baby would be a pretty big side effect." She giggled and touched her stomach. "A front effect!"

She flung the ice from her glass into the kitchen sink and washed out the glass.

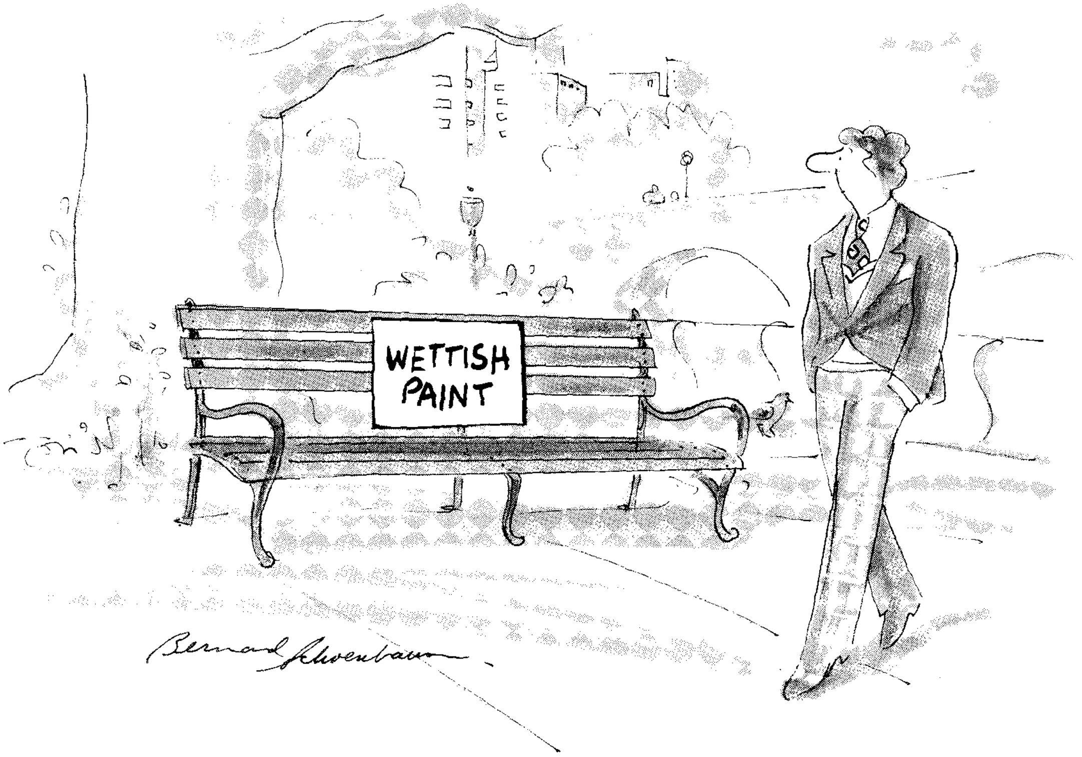
"Do *you* want to marry Lonnie?" Dawn asked.

"I don't know," Sam said slowly. "I'm just in this situation, and Lonnie's not my main thought right now." She picked a wadded paper towel up from the floor. "He's so sweet to me. It would just kill him if we broke up."

"Lonnie is a hunk and a half," Dawn said. "If you married him, your name would be Sam Malone, like that guy on 'Cheers.' "

"Yeah. I used to think that would be terrific, but now I'm not so sure."

Dawn wiped the counter with the dishrag. She said, "You know what I wish we could do? I wish my brother would let us borrow his car so we could go hang out at one of those bars



in Paducah where those travelling businessmen go. We could wear our sexiest outfits and they'd think we were a lot older. Maybe they'd buy us something to eat and give us some money."

"I'd be satisfied if we could just go to the mall in Paducah."

"Yeah. This town is dead without a mall," Dawn said, wringing out the dishrag.

WHEN Sam got home from Dawn's, Emmett was digging a hole alongside the house. He was shovelling dirt furiously, heaping it on the grass.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm trying to find where that basement leak's coming from, and I've got to expose the foundation under the kitchen."

Emmett's T-shirt was sweaty, and his face was red. Next door, Mrs. Biggs, a widow living on Social Security, was watching him suspiciously from her porch. These days, with the campaign news on television every evening, Mrs. Biggs lived in terror that Jesse Jackson might be elected President.

When Emmett saw Sam's ears, he said, "Daddy used to tag cattle that way."

"I might put a ring through my nipple next," she said.

Mrs. Biggs plunged through an opening in the box hedge. "Are you digging to China?" she chirped. She was a tiny woman, with white hair in finger waves.

"What I'm doing is excavating," Emmett explained to Mrs. Biggs. "It's noble work. The Egyptians and the Romans were all great excavators, as well as great builders. It's a grand tradition."

"Your cat messed in my petunias again," said Mrs. Biggs.

"That's good fertilizer, Mrs. Biggs. Moon Pie's got high-quality fertilizer." Emmett grunted with the effort of his digging. "The Egyptians worshipped cats, too. The two things go together—respect for cats and earthwork." He tipped his Pepsi cap at her politely.

Emmett kept working till dark, taking time out only to eat some pizza Lonnie brought over. He seemed obsessed. He spaded the hard clay, and when he hit rocks he gouged them out with a pickaxe. Sam had never seen him work so hard. He sweated and cussed at the rocks. Sometimes he would pause and touch his temple for a moment, waiting for the sensation to pass. It was as though he were listening to some inner music. While he worked, he listened to Rock-95 on the Walkman. He said he had not heard the new Beatles song, and Sam had not heard it again either. Emmett insisted she must have been mistaken. Sam had been thinking that she should encourage him to talk more about the war, the way he used to when she was little. That was before he calmed down and settled into his routines. It would be good for him to talk about it more, she told Lonnie—the way Dr. Sidney Freedman on "M*A*S*H" got his patients to talk out their anxieties. But she knew very well that on TV people always had the words to express their feelings, while in real life hardly anyone ever did. On TV, they had scriptwriters.

The next day, at dawn, Emmett was outside digging again. He even skipped his usual breakfast at McDonald's. Sam went running. She ran four miles—all the way across town to the Fairview subdivision and back—and when she returned, Emmett's father, Sam's granddad, was there watching him. He had come over to get Emmett to help him haul some calves, but Emmett made excuses. Emmett and his father had had a falling-out a couple of years before over some soybeans he had wanted Emmett to go halves on.

"When are you going to get a job like everybody else and stop fooling around?" Granddad Smith muttered.

"Ain't nothing worth doing," Emmett said, flinging dirt at Granddad's feet. "Most jobs are stupid. They just use up the earth's resources. Plunder the planet. How's Mama?" he asked, changing the subject.

"She's after me, wanting to go to Florida."

"You ought to go. Did the wind get you the other night?"

"No. It just stormed hard. It blowed down a dead tree along the fence line, and our dog lost his mind. We'll have to shoot him, I reckon."

"Buster?"

"No. Rusty—that bench-legged fice I traded for last year. He's real high-strung." Granddad nodded at Sam. "Sam, you come on out to the house and we'll feed you. You need a little fattening up."

"I would if I had a car," Sam said.

"We'll come and get you. Your grandma will cook you some country ham and damson pie. And we won't let Emmett have any."

Demerits

"Not if you're going to shoot your dog."

"Well, I guess we won't do that. But he never did have a lick of sense."

SAM had seen a bumper sticker in town: "SPRAYED AND BETRAYED." When she told Emmett, he grunted and kept digging. He had Clearasil on his face. She realized that not every soldier who came back from Vietnam was as weird as Emmett. She knew of veterans—relatives of classmates—who had adjusted perfectly well. They had nice houses and wives and kids. They didn't refuse to get a job or buy a car. Allen Wilkins was one of them. He owned a menswear store and coached Little League. His daughter was a teen model in a Glamor Barn TV ad on Channel 6. Sam wondered if it was just her own crazy family rather than Vietnam.

The next morning, she decided to go along with Emmett to McDonald's instead of taking her usual run. She was curious about the veterans he hung around with. She had known them for years but had never thought much about them as vets.

At McDonald's, Emmett's buddies hadn't arrived yet. A small bald man who worked with Lonnie's father at the hardware store stopped at their booth and teased Emmett about his "new girlfriend." He meant Sam.

"She keeps me in line," Emmett said, elbowing Sam.

"Emmett, I heard they're hiring at the cookie factory," the man said.

"Fuck the cookie factory," Emmett said, with his mouth full of Egg McMuffin.

The man winked at Sam. "Do you let him use that language at home, Sam?"

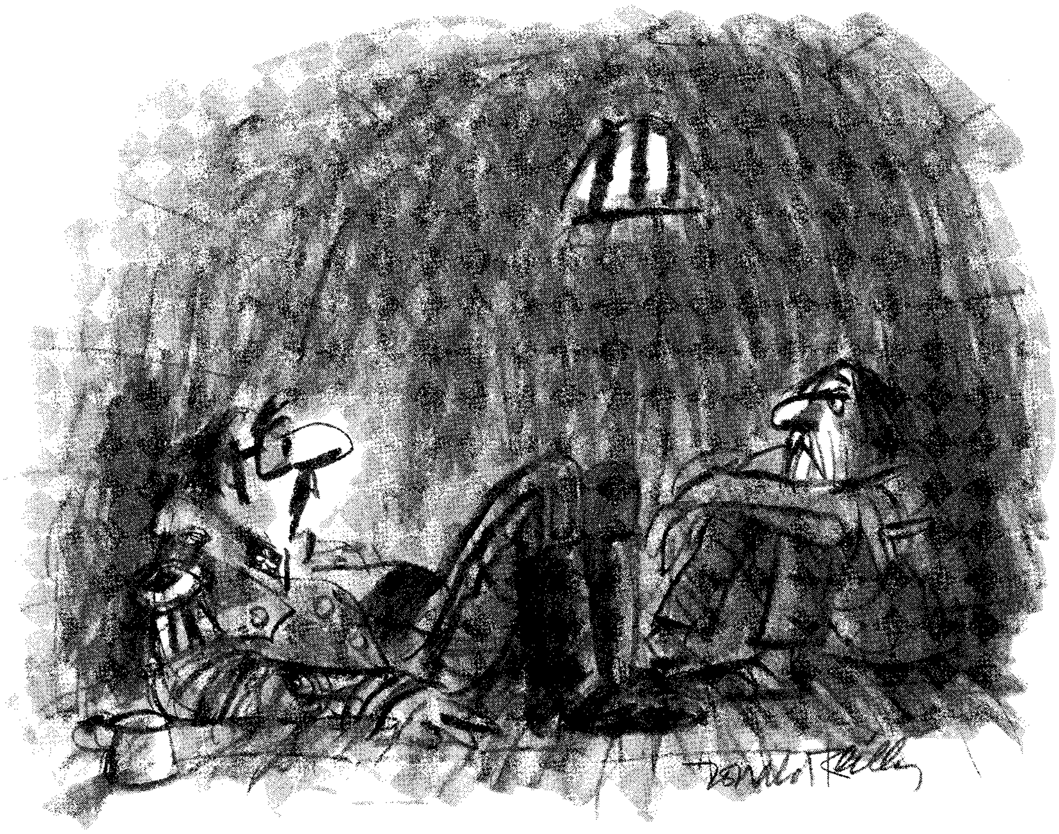
She shrugged. "It's on HBO."

"Does he let you watch HBO?"

"He don't care," she said, irritated.

"If I had HBO, I wouldn't let my wife watch it."

"Don't pay no attention to him, Sam," Emmett said as the man walked away.



"It simply never occurred to me that a messy desk could be grounds for a coup d'état."

• •

Pete Simms and Tom Hudson joined them. They had Cokes and little apple pies. Pete worked on a highway crew, and Tom was an auto mechanic with his own body shop. Sam knew Tom had been wounded in the war, but she couldn't tell, except that his posture was a little stiff. He sat down beside Emmett.

"Do you care if I set next to you, Sam?" asked Pete. "I won't bite."

"I'll let you set here if you show me your tattoo," Sam said impulsively. Emmett had once told her about Pete's tattoo. When Pete was in Vietnam, he had had a map of the Jackson Purchase region of western Kentucky tattooed on his chest.

"You want me to show you right here?" Pete asked flirtatiously. "I might get arrested. Come on out to my truck and I'll show you."

"What kind of truck you got?"

"A Ford Ranger. Why?"

"I need a car," Sam said.

"You need a hole in the head," said Emmett.

"I wonder if anybody ever tattooed his own face on his chest," Sam said. "Like a face on a T-shirt."

"I tell you one thing," Pete said. "I wish I had a goddam T-shirt with this map on it instead of having it on my chest." He ate a bite of apple pie. "Ow! That's hot! Emmett, how come this long-legged little niece of yours is here? What's her trouble?"

"She's got ants in her pants," said Emmett.

"*He's* got Agent Orange," said Sam. "Look at his face."

"*I* got Agent Orange," said Pete jokingly. "In the head." He laughed and blew on his pie. "I had a place come on my leg, all brown and funny? But it went away. Reckon it ate on down to the bone?"

"Nothing can hurt you, Pete," said Tom. "You're like that guy on TV that ate a bicycle."

"That was on 'That's Incredible,'" said Sam. "I saw that."

"Don't you know that was bound to mess that guy up?" Pete said with a grin.

"Did either one of you get sprayed with Agent Orange?" Sam asked point-blank.

Pete and Tom sucked their Coke straws simultaneously.

"I don't think so," Tom said

slowly. He tapped a cigarette from a wrinkled pack.

Emmett snapped his Egg McMuffin box shut. "Sam's got Nam on the brain," he said. "She's been reading a bunch of history books and pestering me."

"What do those books tell you, Sam?" asked Tom, staring at her.

"Nothing. They're just dull history books." She was embarrassed. The books didn't say what it was like to be at war over there. The books didn't even have pictures.

Pete said, "Hell, I remember when they used to spray it. They'd tell us to get inside because they were going to spray, but it wasn't any big deal. It smelled sweet. It smelled like oranges."

"Buddy Mangrum can't even drink half a beer without getting sick," Tom said. "They say that's Agent Orange."

There was a racket in the back of McDonald's. A kids' birthday party was beginning. Sam tried to imagine these men fighting in the jungle. She had never been able to picture Emmett with a gun, but Granddad had talked offhandedly about shooting the dog. Emmett had told her Granddad wasn't serious.

"I think my problem's I might be allergic to fleas," Emmett said with a shiver. "My cat's got fleas. And he sleeps right on my head."

"If I had a car, I'd take you to the V.A.," Sam said. "I'd march you right in there and show them your face. Boy, I'd give anything for a car."

"Tom's got a car he wants to sell," Pete said.

"That bug? Yeah, I'll sell you my VW bug." Tom and Pete looked at each other and laughed. "I'll have to fix it up some, but you can have it for six thousand dollars."

Pete laughed. "Don't let him rip you off, Sam. It's a '73."

"I'll give you a bargain," Tom said. "You can have it for six hundred. It runs good. I just have to fix it up a little."

"I don't have that much." She had three hundred dollars in the bank, but she had to live on it for the summer.

"You can come and see it."

Tom was looking straight into her eyes, and she looked away, punching her straw in her drink. Something about him excited her, but she didn't know what it was. He looked at her as though he really wanted her to have that car. She knew her face must be red.

Emmett flattened his Egg McMuffin box and went to the men's room.

"Do you want to see my tattoo, Sam?" Pete said with a wink.

"Sure."

"That's my street," Pete said, lifting his T-shirt and pointing to his chest. "And that little red thing that looks like a ladybug is my old Corvette. My wife sold it while I was gone. It would be a classic now."

Hairs sprouted from the heart of the Jackson Purchase. The tattoo was the size of a *National Geographic*, outlined in blue, with the towns in red.

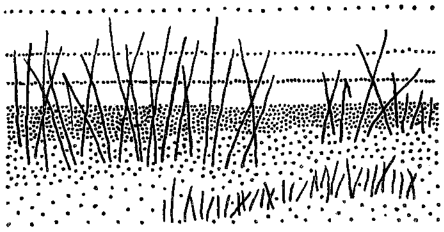
He said, "I look at it upside down, and in the mirror it's backwards. This was maybe the stupidest thing I ever did in my life." He laughed.

Tom laughed with him. "When you're that age, you do some of the stupidest things you could ever think of, and you think, Oh, wow, ain't this the funniest thing in the world!" He shrugged. He wasn't bad-looking, Sam thought. He was about Emmett's age.

"You think about that car, Sam," Tom said when he left. "Come over and see it if you want to."

On the way home, Sam asked Emmett, "Are your friends always that goofy?"

"They just like to have fun. They're good guys."



REVIVING THE GEYSER, REYKJAVÍK, ICELAND, 1935

(FROM THE PHOTOGRAPH BY JÓN DAHLMANN)

One man in a derby hat, another
in leggings, and a woman
with the brown, sensible shoes of a chemist.
Just behind these friends
is a thermal circle of
dwarf willow, eyebright, and heath—
and before them the slack basin,
no hiss and bellow, no steam
hurling up its magnificent stitch.

There is urgency on these faces.
Already the snows creep
closer to this mild setting,
like a ringmaster's animals.

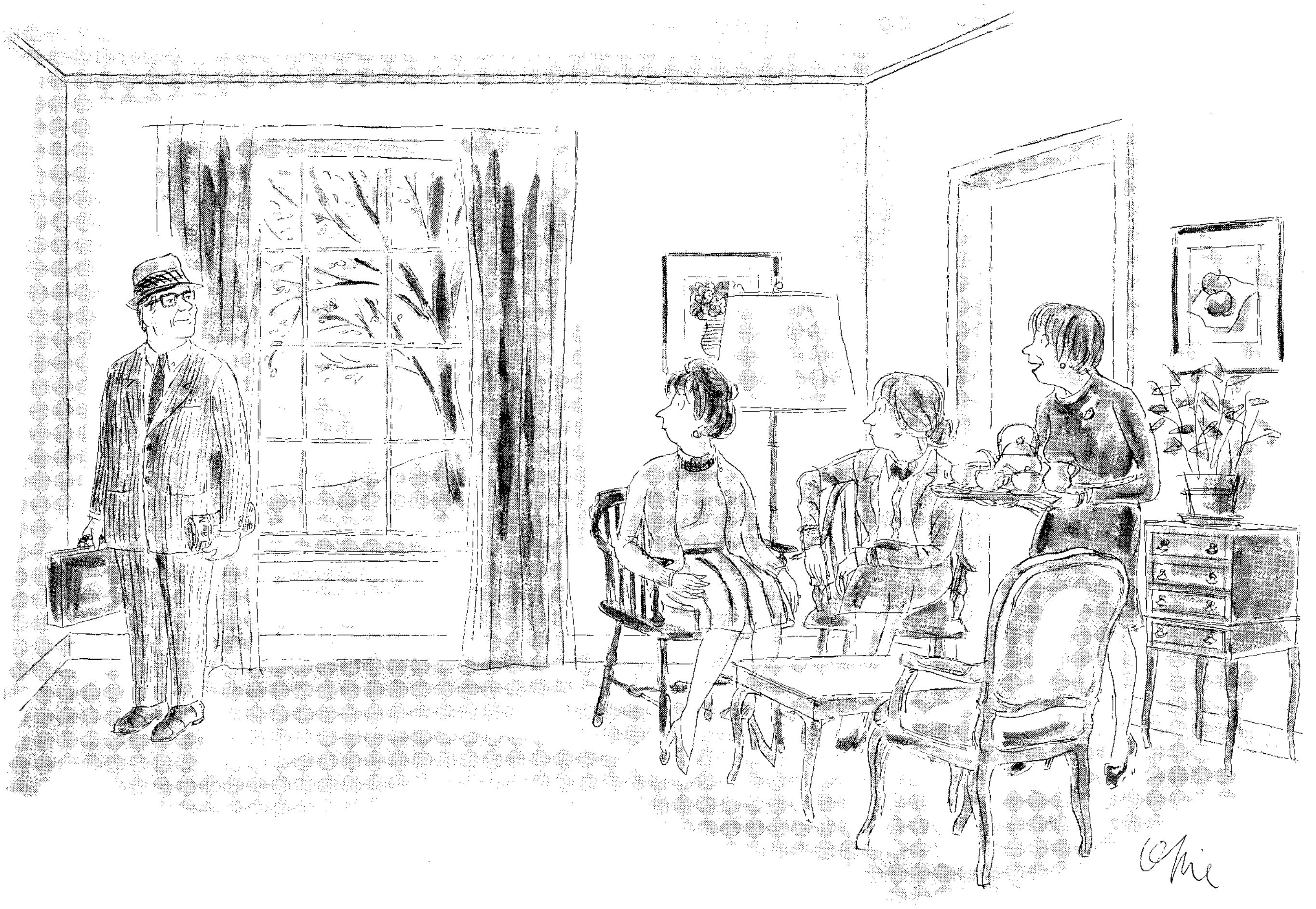
To encourage pressure the man
in the derby hat drops
chunks of pan soap through the quiet water.
They sink like yellow skulls,
and then on the surface

he sees the rippling legs of the woman,
his own small face in its black topknot.
A woodcock sings from a tangle of willow.
The man thinks of his wife at the loom, how
often in the late, thin light her beautiful arms
cross and recross the breast beam

with the stroke of a swimmer.
There is pain in his shoulders, in
his pale neck stretched
over the basin. He thinks of a time
when love, in terms of
his place in the world, was everything.

—LINDA BIERDS

• •



"That's Robert, done in polyester resin, standing on the platform waiting for the eight-twelve, and watching me as I drive off in the station wagon waving goodbye."

• •

"I wish I had that Volkswagen," she said. Her mother used to have one, and Sam had learned to drive on it.

"I don't think you can buy a car. You're underage."

"I could if you sign for me."

"Since I'm so responsible and have so much money? Yeah, anybody suing me would strike it rich!"

"Would you sign for me if I bought a car?"

"You get the money first and ask me again."

Sam saw a blue Volkswagen Beetle down the street, in front of a funeral parlor. She wouldn't mind having a VW bug.

Sam suddenly remembered something she had heard about Pete. Cautiously, she asked, "Hey, Emmett, is it true that Pete chased his wife out of the house once with a shotgun?"

"No, she was chasing him. He was out in the yard shooting—not at her. He was just shooting. Cindy wouldn't put up with his foolishness, though. She told him he had to quit it or she was walking."

"What was Pete shooting at?"

They crossed the street before he would answer. On the corner was the dental clinic where her mother used to be a receptionist. Sam asked him again, "What was Pete shooting at?"

"He said it was just an urge that come over him, and he got rid of it by going out and shooting off his gun."

When they were a block from the house, Emmett said suddenly, "He had a map of Vietnam in the den, and his wife tore it down because it didn't fit her decorating scheme. It sounds crazy, but I think he'd rather be back in Nam."

"Did you ever wish that?"

"No. Hell, no! Are you kidding?"

At the corner of their block, Emmett paused to look at something off in the field down by the waterworks, perhaps a bird, but he seemed to be listening for something, and Sam thought of the way Radar O'Reilly, on "M*A*S*H," could always hear the choppers coming in with wounded before anyone else could.

Emmett could look at anything—a rosebush, a stop sign, an ordinary bird, or even a circular from Kroger's—and get absorbed in it as though it were the most fascinating thing on earth. That was how he was so good at Pac-Man, and it was the way he watched his birds, stalking them and probably imagining a full-feathered bird based on nothing more than a glimpse of wing, a bright patch of crest or throat. Emmett reminded Sam of James Stewart in "Harvey," an old movie they had seen on Channel 7's Midnight Theatre. Harvey was an imaginary rabbit who went everywhere with James Stewart. Sometimes it seemed that Emmett had somebody invisible along with him, too, some presence that guided him. But it probably wasn't a rabbit. It was probably a cat.

When Sam was seven or eight, she and Emmett had a stamp collection. They spent hours together poring over cellophane packets of exotic stamps sent on trial each month from stamp companies. Their stamp album was old and the countries were wrong—old colonial countries like Ceylon and the Belgian Congo. Vietnam was Indo-Chine. While they played with the stamps, Emmett told Sam war stories, sprinkled with M-60s and grenade launchers and C-130 transport planes, and Sam's favorite—the amtrac, which Emmett laughingly described as a "yellow submarine." Sam had a picture of Vietnam in her mind from Emmett's stories—a pleasant countryside, something like Florida, with beaches and palm trees and watery fields of rice and green mountains. The sky was crowded with wonderful aircraft—C-47s with Gatling guns, Hueys, Chinooks, Skytrains, Bird Dogs. Emmett even made plastic models of helicopters and jet fighters, and he used them to act out his stories.

Irene stopped the stories. It upset her to be reminded of the war, but the reality of it didn't register on Sam until one day soon after they got their first color TV set. She was eight or nine. On the evening news, a report from Vietnam—it was during the fall of Saigon, in 1975, she thought—showed some people walking along a road with bundles on their backs. Some were carrying babies in their arms. Army jeeps chugged along the road. The landscape was believable—a hill in the distance, a paved road with narrow dirt shoulders, a field with something green planted in rows. The road resembled the old Hopewell road that twisted through the bottomland toward Paducah. For the first time, Vietnam was an actual place. As Sam watched, a child in a T-shirt and no pants ran down the road, and its mother called after it, scolding it.

SAM heard the new Beatles song on the radio again, while she was having Cokes with Lonnie and Dawn at the Burger Boy. It really was the Beatles—a previously unreleased cut from 1964, the d.j. said. Hearing it was eerie, like voices from the grave. Sam sat there dazed, trying to grasp the words, while Lonnie and Dawn chattered about the construction work he was doing for his uncle. They didn't notice how far away she was. "You better leave my kitten all alone," the song went. It was great. Hearing it, Sam felt the energy of the sixties, like desire building and exploding. But there was something playful in the song, as if back then were a much better time to be young than now. Her mother knew somebody who had been to a Beatles concert in 1966.

Sam told Emmett about the song when she got home, and he still couldn't believe it. "Irene will flip out when she hears it," he said.

He was in the kitchen making tacos. He was mincing onions, making tiny crosshatches and then slicing off the bits. "Where's Lonnie?" he asked.

"Working on that house with his uncle."

"Is *he coming over for supper?*"

"No. His mother's having chicken and dumplings tonight."

Emmett zipped open a box of taco shells and placed six of them in a pan. He set them in the oven. He did all this with careful concentration, as if he expected to see them turn into something wonderful in the oven. "Your mama called again," he said.

Sam took an orange Popsicle from the freezer compartment of the refrigerator. She broke it in two, then removed half from the paper and bit off the end. It was slightly mushy. "The refrigerator's out of whack again," she said.

"Irene said to call her collect after nine o'clock," said Emmett.

Sam swallowed a lump of Popsicle. "Is she coming down here this summer?"

"She didn't say."

"She probably can't bear to leave Lorenzo Jones. He's got her snowed. He claims he's just like *this* with the Whitneys." Sam crossed her fingers and stuck them in front of Emmett's face. "But I happen to know for a fact he was just a stablehand at the Whitney Horse Farm and that was ages ago."

"You're jealous."

"I am not."

"I'll say this for Larry," Emmett said. "He never had a pot to pee in, but he's got it made now. Irene likes being married to an I.B.M. big shot."

"I'm just mad that she ran out on us. And if I went to U.K., I'd never get any sleep with a baby around."

"You're *jealous of the baby.*"

"Lorenzo Junior."

"Her name is Heather. I think it's a real pretty name."

Sam laughed. "Mom thought Samantha was a pretty name, too. She never could stand it that everybody called me Sam."

"Your daddy was the one that named you Samantha," Emmett said.

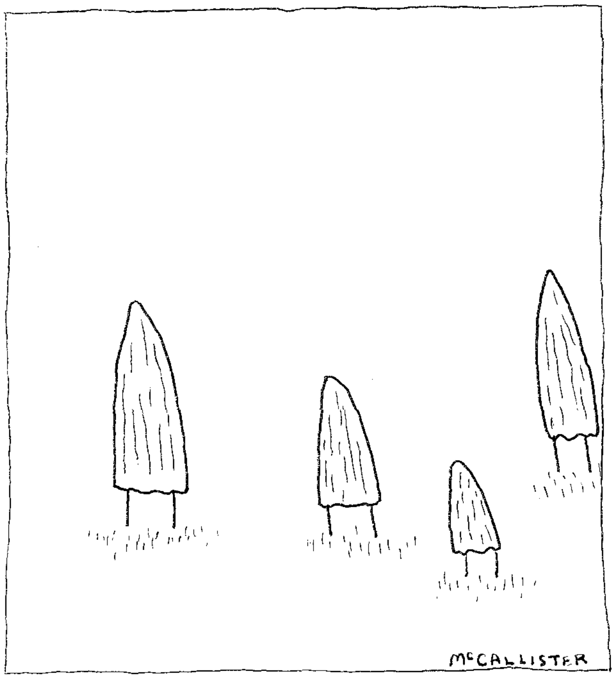
"Hey! What do you mean?"

Emmett flipped a Pepsi and drank from it before he answered. "Dwayne wrote Irene once and said he wanted to name you Samantha because it was his favorite name." He belched loudly.

"I never knew that." Sam was surprised. The Popsicle dripped on her leg.

Sam used to think Irene named her after an actress named Samantha something, whose hobby was bullfighting. Sam got scratched on some barbed wire once while trying to escape from a bull Granddad Smith had rented for his cows, and she had to have a tetanus shot. "Why would you name me after somebody who fights bulls?" she had asked her mother accusingly, but Irene denied that Sam's name had anything to do with a bullfighting movie star. Sam was confused. If she couldn't know a simple fact like the source of her name, what could she know for sure?

Emmett rattled the newspaper in her face. "Let me show you what Dr.



Dobbs said today." He located the medical column in the middle of the paper. "This person wrote in with heartburns, and Dr. Dobbs says it might be Tietze's syndrome. It mimics the symptoms of a heart attack, but it's just inflamed cartilage in the rib cage. Reckon that's what I got instead of gas?"

"Maybe. Why don't you write and ask him about those firecrackers in your head? And ask him why that pimple on your nose hasn't healed in two months? And why you've got pimples creeping down the back of your neck? He'll say it's Agent Orange, I bet you money."

"Oh, them doctors don't believe in Agent Orange."

Sam sucked her Popsicle stick. The smell of the taco shells burst forth from the oven. She said suddenly, "Hey, Emmett. Tell me what you remember most about Vietnam. Besides that bird."

Emmett peeked into the oven. "What do you want to know for?" he asked.

"Just asking."

"The smell of fish sauce," he said. "And human manure in the rice paddies. And all those people pedalling their bicycles."

"What else? Tell me something that happened. Tell me about that hooch that blew up." She remembered that story. The soldiers blew up a house. The plywood covers on the windows popped off, and then it rained fire. The hooch had a bunker in it where the Vietcong were hiding. Emmett had said the scene was like the wolf and the three little pigs. There was a pig squealing. When the hooch fell down, the pig ran around in circles squealing. Somebody shot it, but it still danced until it fell down dead. And then the pig got barbecued.

"You don't want to know all of that, Sam."

"Yes, I do."

"Your imagination is bad enough as it is. I'm not going to feed it."

"If you don't tell me, then I'll just imagine it was worse than it was."

"No, you couldn't do that."

"Well, then, tell me more about that hooch."

Emmett jerked open a cabinet door and shut it and then opened another one. "Have you seen that dooey I drain the lettuce in?"

"Moon Pie had it out on Sixth Street."

"Be serious." Emmett banged more doors. "Oh, damn it to hell! Where's that strainer?"

During "M*A*S*H," Sam and Emmett ate the tacos and drank a quart of Pepsi. They ate on TV tables Emmett had picked up at a yard sale. On "M*A*S*H," Trapper John got an ulcer, and Hawkeye got excited that Trapper might get to go home, but Trapper got his ulcer cured with a three-week stay at Tokyo General. Usually, whenever any of the "M*A*S*H" regulars got a chance to go home they thought of excuses to stay in Korea. Radar believed the outfit couldn't be run without him. Colonel Potter got a chance to go home once, but he wouldn't desert his post, even though he missed his wife, Mildred, back in Missouri. Of course, the series would have collapsed if the regulars had gone home, but Sam wondered if there wasn't some truth to the idea that war was attractive. Emmett had even said that Pete preferred the war. She had been reading about how the United States got involved. All the names ran together. Ngo Dinh Diem. Bao Dai. Dien Bien Phu. Ho Chi Minh. She got bogged down in manifestos and State Department documents.

At nine o'clock, she dialled her mother, in Lexington, on the kitchen phone. She called collect.

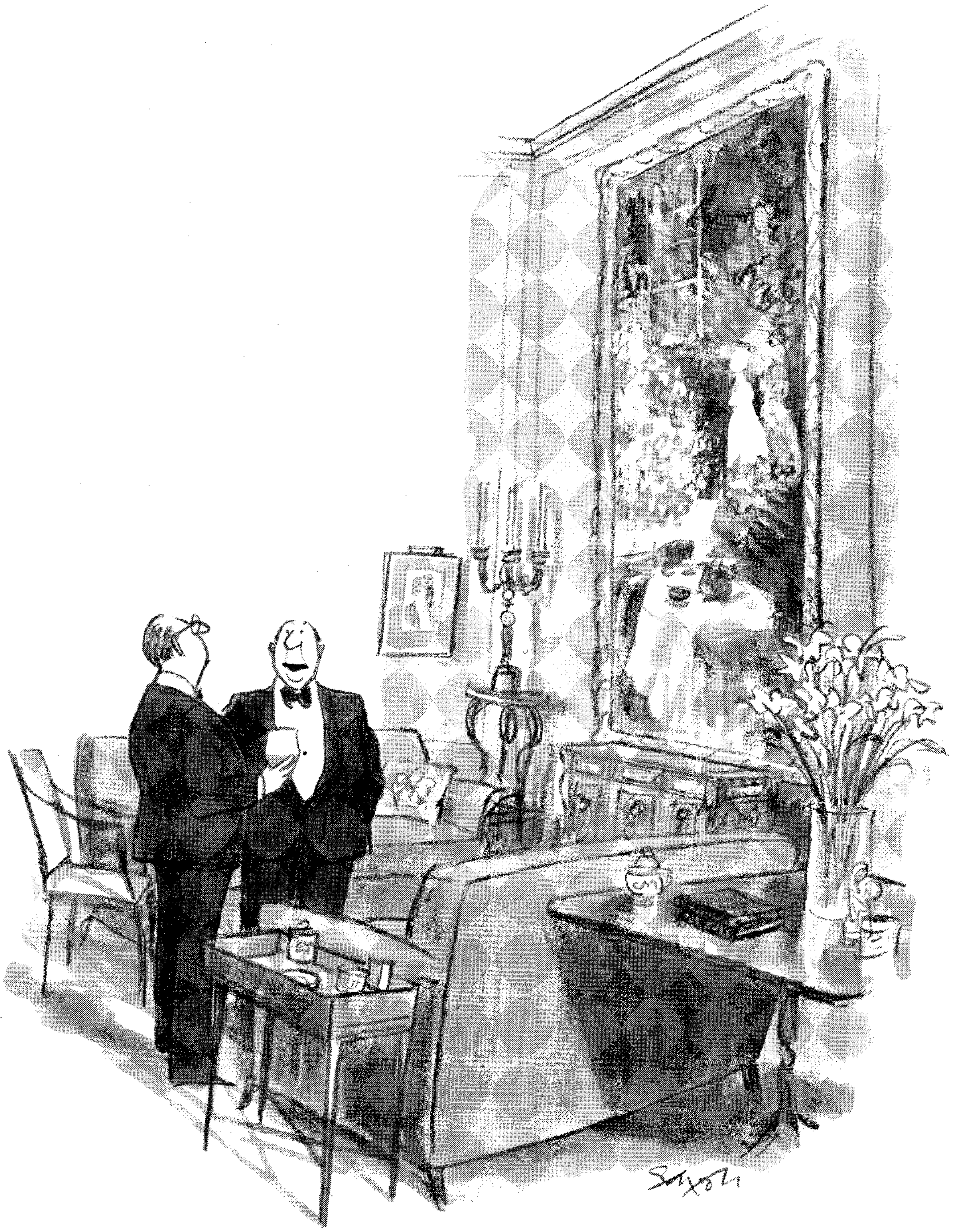
"I just got the baby to sleep," Irene said breathlessly. "She's cutting a tooth and I was up all night last night. When are you coming up here?"

"I told you I didn't want to go to U.K." Just then Emmett went out the door in his Pepsi cap, with a beer in his hand. Sam said, "I'm going back to work at the Burger Boy."

"Sam, how many times do I have to tell you that if you want to spend your life waiting on somebody, then go right ahead. You'll be sorry if you don't go to school. Thank God I don't have to work now. I'm through being a slave."

"All I need is a car and I can commute to Murray State," Sam said. "Besides, those education benefits are good till I'm twenty-six."

It wasn't true that going to college



"People tell me how valuable it is, but I just bought it because I like it."

• •

guaranteed a better job. Sam knew a guy who drove a Pepsi truck and made more than most people who went to college. He was the guy who gave Emmett the Pepsi cap.

"You're the stubbornest kid I ever knew," Irene said.

"I've got a bone to pick with you," Sam blurted out.

"What about?"

"My name. Emmett says it wasn't your idea to name me Samantha. He says it was my daddy's."

"He liked the name a real whole lot."

"Why didn't you ever tell me that?"

"Didn't I?"

"You never told me anything—about him, or about Vietnam. You always wanted to forget it, like it never happened. I think that's why you gave up on Emmett."

"I put up with Emmett for thirteen years, and I think I deserve a little happiness now, so don't talk to me in that tone, Sam. Good grief."

Happiness? With Lorenzo Jones? Sam imagined him standing against the bar—they had a *bar*—admiring his collection of Jim Beam bottles. He collected oddly shaped liquor bottles sold every Christmas, and he bragged about how they were worth money. He even had a train, with an engine and a caboose, and each part of the train was a Jim Beam bottle.

"What's Emmett going to do about that G.I. Bill money he owes?" Irene asked.

"Who knows? He got another letter from the V.A. They're charging interest." Sam explained about the basement leak and told her mother he was probably digging out the foundation to keep busy, to avoid thinking about his debt. She said, "I'm worried about his pimples."

"I'd have pimples too if I drank as much Pepsi as he does."

"Don't you think it's Agent Orange?"

"Oh, I don't know, Sam."

"I should get him an appointment at the V.A. hospital. What if he's got cancer?"

"You're taking too much on yourself, Sam. I wish you'd come up here."

"I can't leave Emmett."

Her mother's exasperated sigh sounded suspiciously like cigarette smoke being exhaled. Her mother had a nice new house and a baby. This house in Hopewell had nasty ashtrays and dead things in the refrigerator and sagging furniture. Emmett had left three crumpled beer cans on the coffee table.

Sam said, "Emmett has this weird pain in his head." She described it and said it might be a tumor.

"That sounds like what he used to have a few years ago. It must have come back. You have a horrible imagination, Sam."

"I can't help it."

"Don't fret too much over this Viet-

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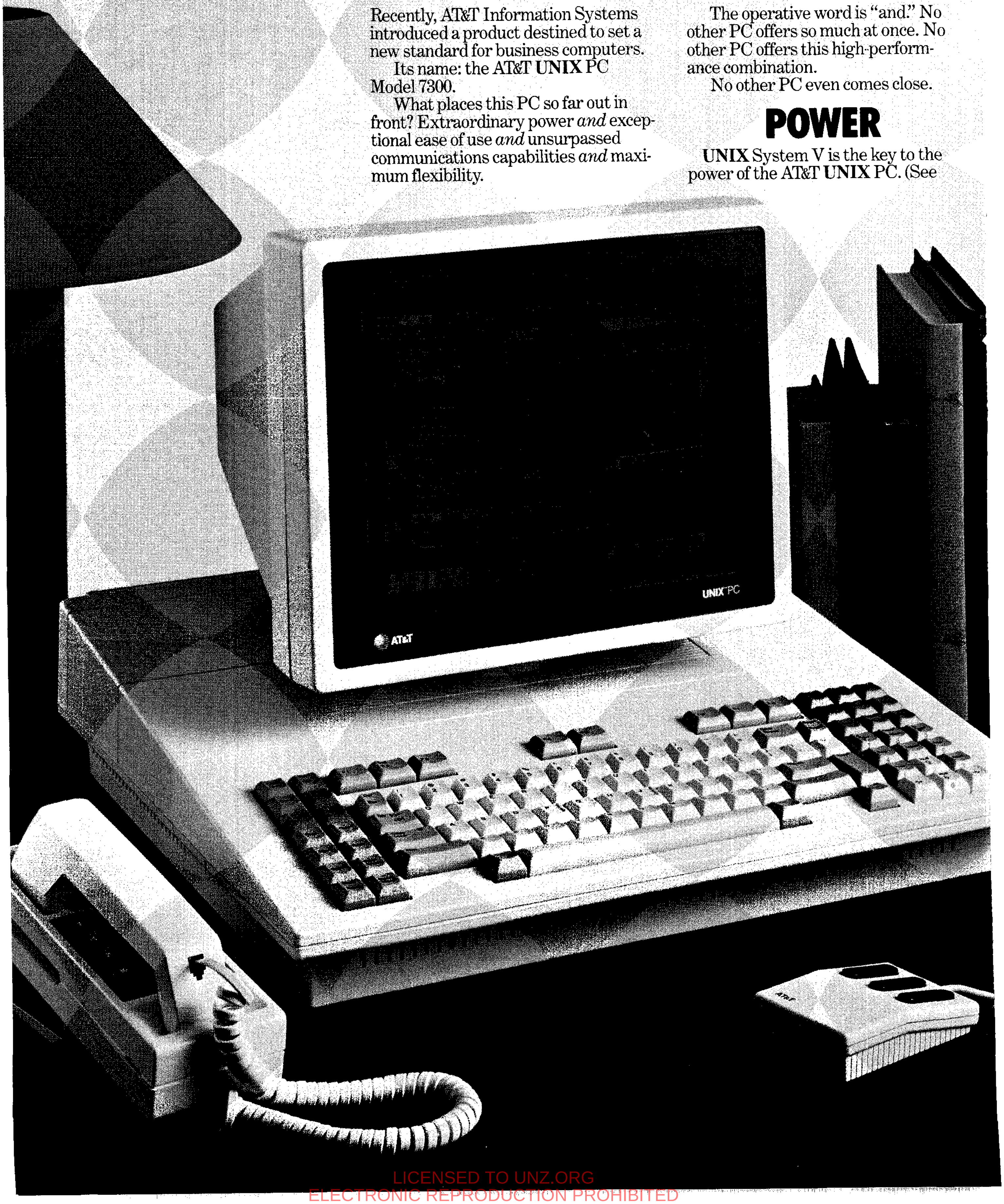

THE AT&T UNIX™ PC

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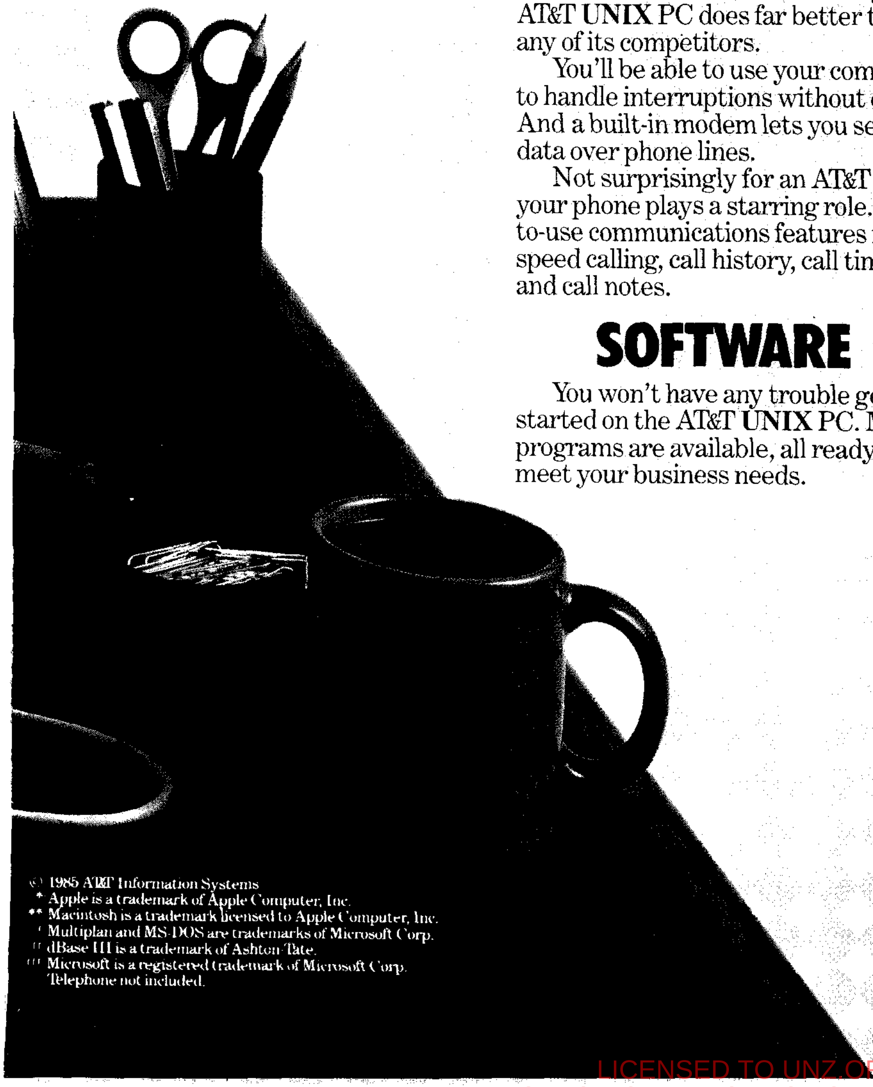

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nam thing, Sam. You shouldn't feel bad about any of it. It had nothing to do with you."

Sam didn't know what to say.

Irene asked, "What's Emmett doing now?"

"He's outside hunting for Moon Pie. It's getting dark."

"It's already dark here," Irene said. "You're so far away from me that it gets dark here sooner."

Sam wanted to tell her mother about the new Beatles record, but she was afraid her mother wouldn't be interested. Irene had left all her old records behind. She didn't want to hear about the past.

Sam said, "The refrigerator's out of whack again."

Upstairs, in her room, Sam flipped through her mother's old records: the Beatles, the Kinks, the Stones, the Jefferson Airplane, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Gerry and the Pacemakers, the Dave Clark Five. There was even an old Beatles L.P. on the Parlophone label, issued in England. Irene used to be crazy about the Liverpool sound. She had every Beatles record except "Leave My Kitten Alone."

Moon Pie had come in, and Sam held him under the light and picked fleas off his head. She pinched a flea in two and white goo shot out. She beheaded another one and both parts still wiggled. The flea had blood in it. Moon Pie jumped out of her lap and landed in the bed. He curled his body and then flipped over luxuriously, stretching his long body into a moon curve.

Sam turned on more bulbs in the lamp. It was a tall floor lamp with a carrousel of bulbs and a dusty maroon shade. Sometimes flies landed in the lamp bowl and cooked. They smelled something like barbecued ribs. The smell would have been nice except for knowing it was flies.

Sam took her Webster's Collegiate Dictionary from the shelf. It was a graduation present from her mother—a hint that she should go to college. Boys got cars for graduation, but girls usually had to buy their own cars because they were expected to get married—to guys with cars. Inside the dictionary was her only picture of her father.

In the picture, Dwayne Hughes had on a dark uniform with a cap like the one Sam had worn when she worked at the Burger Boy. His face was long and thin, and a blemish on the bridge of his nose stood out like a connecting point between his eyebrows, like a town on a map. His hair was so short she could see his scalp. His ears stuck out, like Grandma Smith's hen-and-chickens cactuses in the pot with holes on the sides.

The boy in the picture was nineteen. Lonnie was going on nineteen. Sam looked at her face again in the mirror—fat, sassy, stubborn. Her father's face was so scrawny. She couldn't see any resemblance to him.

•

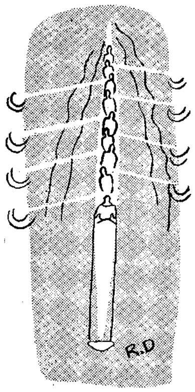
SAM was driving her new car on the back roads toward her grandparents' farm—her father's folks. They had invited her to spend the night, and she had told Emmett not to expect her back until the next day. Mamaw and Pap Hughes lived far out in the country, over twenty miles away, and she had not seen them in almost two years. She felt uneasy, but she loved having a car. Out of the blue, her mother had given her six hundred dollars to buy Tom's Volkswagen, and Emmett had helped her get it registered. Tom had advised her to record the mileage and get gas every two hundred miles. He said he had worked with the gas gauge, but it was a subtle mechanism, harder to repair than something obvious, like a carburetor or a muffler.

All the men she knew fiddled with gadgets. They were always fixing something.

She was far out in the country, and soon she turned off on a smaller road. She passed old farms that looked unchanged since the time her father had lived out here. Irene had said Emmett was a country boy when he went to the war, but Dwayne was even more of a country boy. He rode a school bus to the county school fifteen miles from his house. He had met Irene at a basketball game. Irene and Emmett attended the city school, but they had to pay tuition because they lived outside the city limits. Now a consolidated county school was being built. Grandma Smith always said Irene had felt inferior in the city school because she was self-conscious about being from the country, and so she did rebellious things to get attention, like read the Genesis chapter with the boring list of "begat"s as her Bible passage in homeroom. But Sam was proud that her mother had been so wild.

Sam had wanted to care about her

father, but she didn't know enough about him. She wasn't even sure how her mother had felt about him, if she had really loved him. If Irene had begun to see the war was wrong, would she have started to blame him after he died? Sam didn't know. She didn't know how she felt about him either. She thought of Tom, and how she had wanted Dwayne to be like him. But Tom was old, and in his letters Dwayne was just a kid. Dwayne and Irene, a teen-age romance. Sam had wanted to believe there was something magic between them that had created her and validated their love. But teen-age romances weren't very significant, she realized now. Sam and Lonnie. Dawn and Ken. Sam had been told so often what a miracle it was that she came along to compensate for the loss of Dwayne. She knew she had been making too much out of the brief time her parents were married before he went overseas. During that month, she had originated. She didn't know why the moment of origin mattered. Scientists were trying to locate the moment of origin of the universe. They wanted to know exactly when it happened, and how, and whether it happened with a big bang or some other way. Maybe the universe originated quietly, without fireworks, the way human life started, with two people who were simply having a good time in bed, or in the back seat of a car. Making a baby had nothing to do with love, or anything mystical, or what they said in church. It was just screwing.



The road meandered past an overgrown graveyard. Some new house trailers perched on blocks in bare fields. She passed through an abandoned settlement, with an old feed mill and a boarded-up store with a rusted Orange Crush sign. The Methodist church was whitewashed and had a newly gravelled parking lot and a marquee on wheels that said "Keep the Christ in Christmas."

Mamaw and Pap lived up a narrow lane, which turned off a gravelled road with a new green sign, "Bob James Rd." She remembered that Bob James was one of the neighbors, a prosperous farmer with eleven children and several hundred acres. She wondered if having a road named after him meant he had died.

As Sam drove up, a speckled chicken skidded across the driveway in front of the car. She parked behind a green Cutlass. On the turnaround were a blue pickup, a battered black pickup, and a Pontiac. A brown hound in a pen roared.

They were expecting her, and Mamaw had dinner ready. Mamaw's daughter, Donna, was there with a baby in a blue romper suit. Somehow Sam never could think of Donna as being her aunt. Mamaw's hair was pinned on top of her head, and she had on a dress with a design similar to the pattern of the chicken. She smelled like sweat and furniture polish.

"Are those chickens Barred Rocks?" Sam asked.

"No. They're Dominecker," said Mamaw, leading Sam through the back porch. The porch sagged, and it was cluttered with buckets and seeds and canning jars.

Pap lifted Sam up by her waist, the way he did when she was little. "I just wanted to see if I could still do it," he said, laughing. "My old bones is give out. I screak so."

"He's been down in his back," Mamaw said disapprovingly.

"But Sam's a beanpole," Donna said, regarding Sam with a curious air of disdain. "I could lift her with one finger."

They were filled with questions about Irene's new baby—her teeth, her hair, her weight—and they supplied comparisons to Donna's little boy. Donna wanted to know why Sam didn't go with her mother to Lexington. "You mean you're still living with your crazy uncle?" she said.

"Leave the child alone," said Mamaw. "If she went up there, look how she might turn out. I think it's fine when children want to stay where they was brought up. Bill Holsum's boy over yonder has to pay three hundred dollars just to fly home every Christmas. It's a shame. Bill never gets to see his grandchildren."

"Fred Turner's boy's in the Air Force and he's stationed in Rome, Italy," said Pap. "Talk about a fur piece from home."

"I saw on 'That's Incredible' this miracle in Italy?" said Donna. "This nun had saved a saint's blood? The saint had been beheaded. And in a ceremony every year the dried blood turns to liquid. The scientists have checked it out and there's no way dried blood can liquefy, so it's a miracle. The one year it wouldn't liquefy was the year of all those earthquakes—1980."

"Law, I'd hate to live over there—with all those miracles they have," said Mamaw.

"They're Catholics," said Donna.

Mamaw set a platter of fried rabbit on the table. "This is swamp rabbit," she said.

"I shot it down in Cole's Bottom," said Pap. "It was the biggest one I ever saw. I had to pack it a mile."

Sam loaded her plate with two legs, mashed potatoes, brown field peas, green jello salad, and slaw. Donna mashed up peas for her baby, who had a scrawny face and hair like duck down.

"I saw you with a girl in town one day last month," said Donna. "I was way across the square, but I could tell how tight that girl's shorts were. I could see her heinie clear across the square. Does she always dress like that?"

"Not in the winter," said Sam indignantly. "She *happens* to be my best friend."

"Let the child eat, Donna," said Mamaw. "She always *was* touchous."

They talked about blue mold on their tobacco crop. Her other grandparents had a nicer house, Sam thought. The Hughes house had old linoleum and no dishwasher.

Mamaw drank some iced tea and said, "I could kick somebody. Back in December, we could have signed up for five dollars a bushel for wheat, but Joe here had to wait and see what it would bring at harvest. He thought it might go higher, but instead wheat was so good this year the price went down, and we got three dollars and ten cents a bushel. So we liked eighty cents making three thousand dollars on the wheat, when we could have made five thousand."

"She's went on and went on," complained Pap. "How was I to know? You got to take a risk sometime."

"He could have signed up for a guaranteed five dollars a bushel back in December," Mamaw said.

"But who would have thought wheat would be so good this year?" Donna said brightly. "I'd have done the same thing."

As they ate, Sam was aware of the studio portrait of her father that was standing on the old oak dish cabinet. She remembered always seeing the picture there. He had longer, darker hair than he had in the picture she had at

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home, and no Army hat. He had on a blue suit. His face was tinted pink, like something an undertaker would do to a dead body. His hair had a slight curl at the middle of his forehead. She squinted her eyes and tried to see him at the table with them. He would be a grown man, like Tom. He wouldn't be like Tom, though, living in a garage apartment. He'd be discussing blue mold and whether to take risks on wheat prices. Irene wouldn't have gone to Lexington. Sam would be jiggling a baby on her knee, like Donna.

Donna and Mamaw were talking about Donna's sister-in-law, who had just moved into a new brick house with her husband and two children. Donna was raving about the house and all its appliances. "And that baby has everything you can name. Jean didn't take any hand-me-downs. And they've got a videocassette recorder and a bedroom suit that cost a thousand dollars. She doesn't think a thing about eating out."

Sam felt sick. She ate two slices of cake. It was white, with boiled icing.

After they ate, Mamaw showed Sam the pictures she had come to see. There were only a few besides the school pictures. She studied the small portraits, with "Burns High School" and the year printed below each one. He changed from a skinny, freckled little boy into a lanky, earnest teenager. Nowadays, the school pictures were in color, and the kids posed in casual settings, by a swimming pool or under a tree, but these old-fashioned pictures were dark, cold, staring portraits. He was smiling in only two of them.

"This one's my favorite," Mamaw said, pointing to a picture in which his cowlick showed. "He was about sixteen there. He was the best boy! That was the year he made me that end table in shop."

"That was the year I was born," Donna said. "I don't have the slightest memory of him, my own brother. Ain't that a shame?"

Sam helped with the dishes. Pap was taking a short nap before he went back to work fixing some fences, and Donna was in her room with the baby. Her husband worked at Union Carbide, and they lived with Mamaw and Pap.

Sam set warm, dry glasses in the dish cabinet. The furniture-polish smell was in the cabinet. On top, her father stared down at her. She had looked at his likeness so often lately he was beginning to seem real, someone who might have some strong opinions about her.

Mamaw's hands didn't stop working at the dishes in the soapy water as she answered Sam's questions about Dwayne. She said, "You take after Irene's side of the family, Sam. You've got Dwayne's eyes, but you've got Irene's ways. And her cheekbones. I used to get so tickled at her. She'd do anything. She come out here once with Dwayne before they married, and she had a kite with her, and if she didn't go out in the pasture in her high heels and fly that kite I'm not here!" Mamaw laughed and dripped soapsuds down her elbows. "Dwayne was so taken with her. He thought she hung the moon."

"What did she think of him?"

"She was good to him." Mamaw swabbed a greasy plate with the dishrag. "Well, of course, he was my boy, but he was the thoughtfulest son you could ever have. That's a mother's privilege to think that, Sam. And he would have made a good farmer. Irene wanted him to go to New Orleans and work on a ship. Irene always wanted something big, anything to be different. But he wouldn't have done that. He would have come right back here. He was like that. He could talk about what-all he was going to do, but when it come down to it he was a mama's boy. He looked out for his mama and daddy. He wouldn't have gone off like Bill Holsum's boy did."

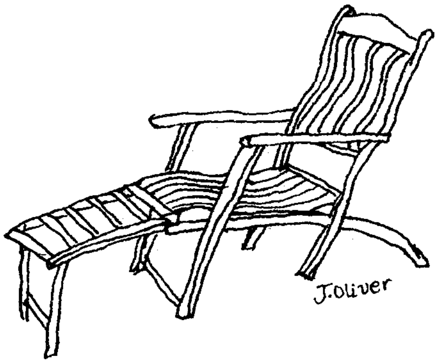
"He was a good boy," said Pap, appearing in the kitchen. "He never took a drink, didn't smoke."

"Did you get your nap out?" Mamaw asked him. "You wasn't laying down long."

"Y'all was beating your gums, and I couldn't sleep."

"Joe, tell Sam about Dwayne. She's here wanting to know more about her daddy. There's not a day I don't think of something loving he did. Like that flower box he made for Irene that time."

"He sure did love Irene," said Pap.



"And I really do believe she loved him. Oh, they was young, and when you're that young you don't really know what you feel, but I saw how she was after the news come. It broke her heart."

"Irene was living at home with her folks then, and you was on the way, Sam. She was as big as a barn."

"We didn't see a whole lot of her," Pap said. "But after the news came they brought her over here, and everybody just set around and waited."

"It was so hard without the body," said Mamaw. "When somebody dies, you're supposed to prepare the body and watch over it. It's something that brings you all together, but he wasn't here. It was three days before we got him, and while we were waiting everybody was so lost. We just run around like a chicken with its head cut off. And the neighbors brought food. Oh, they just kept a-bringing good things to eat. It went on so long the people that brought food had to go home and cook some more for us. Lutie Cunningham brought a ham and a gallon of potato salad and three pies. I never will forget that. In a way, it was a relief when we finally got him in the ground." She laughed—a sort of whimper.

"It was a closed casket," Pap said. "The Army told us not to look."

Maybe it wasn't really him, Sam thought. Maybe he was still missing in action.

"That killed me," Mamaw said. "But they wrote and told what a help he was to his country. I take comfort in that."

"What good did he do for the country?" Sam asked. "Everybody knows it was a stupid war, but fifty-eight thousand guys died. Emmett says they all died for nothing."

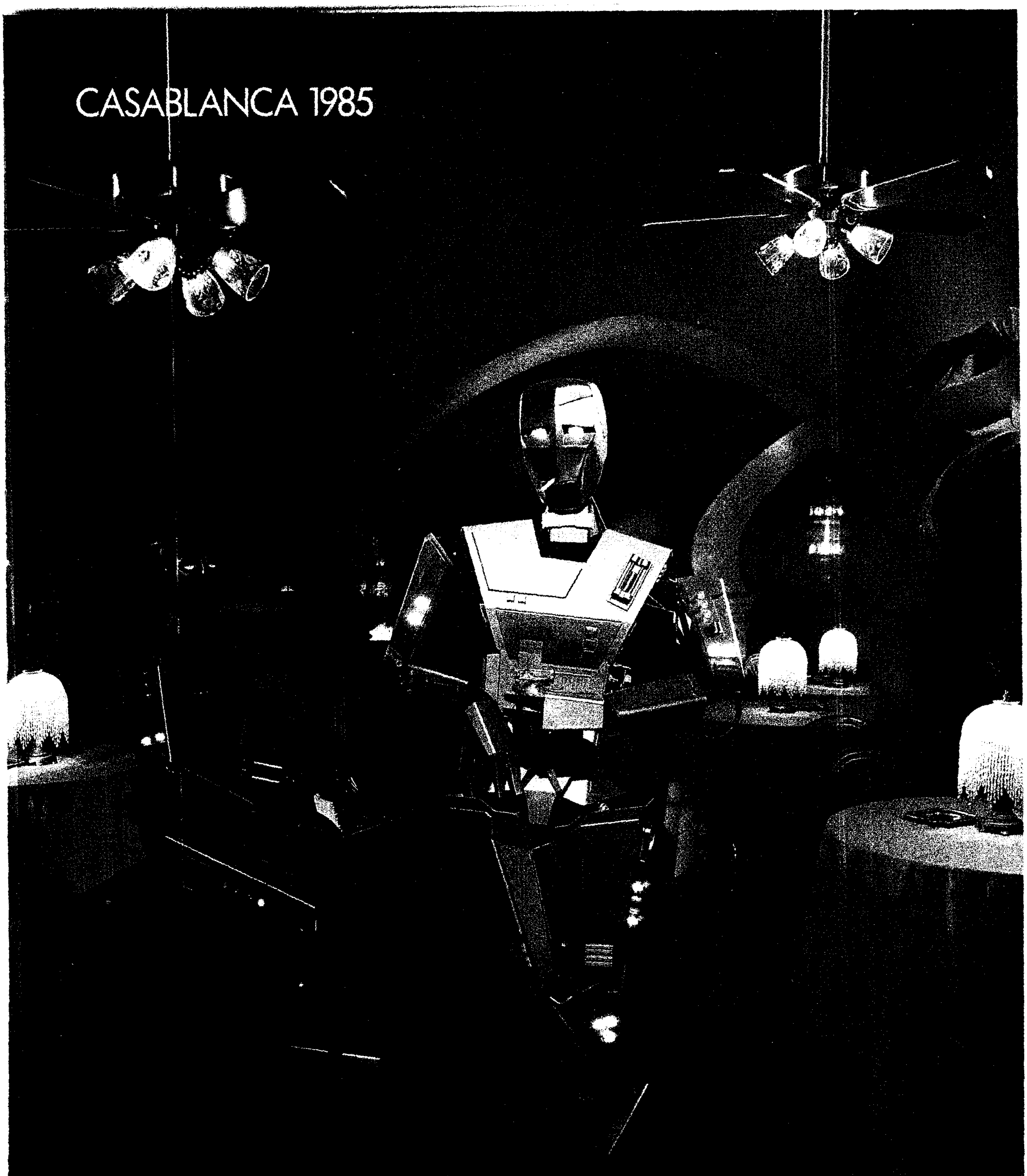
"Well, Emmett can talk. He didn't die," Mamaw said indignantly. "Dwayne was fighting for a cause, and back then people didn't go around protesting. He believed in his country, and he was ready to go over there and fight."

"If you could go back to that time, would you let him go or would you send him to Canada?" Sam asked.

"Oh, Sam," Mamaw said, staring down at the linoleum. "People don't have choices like that."

"Did any stuff come with the body?" Sam asked. "I mean like his personal stuff. His clothes and things."

Mamaw nodded. "There wasn't much. I gave away the clothes, and I made Irene take the flag, but she



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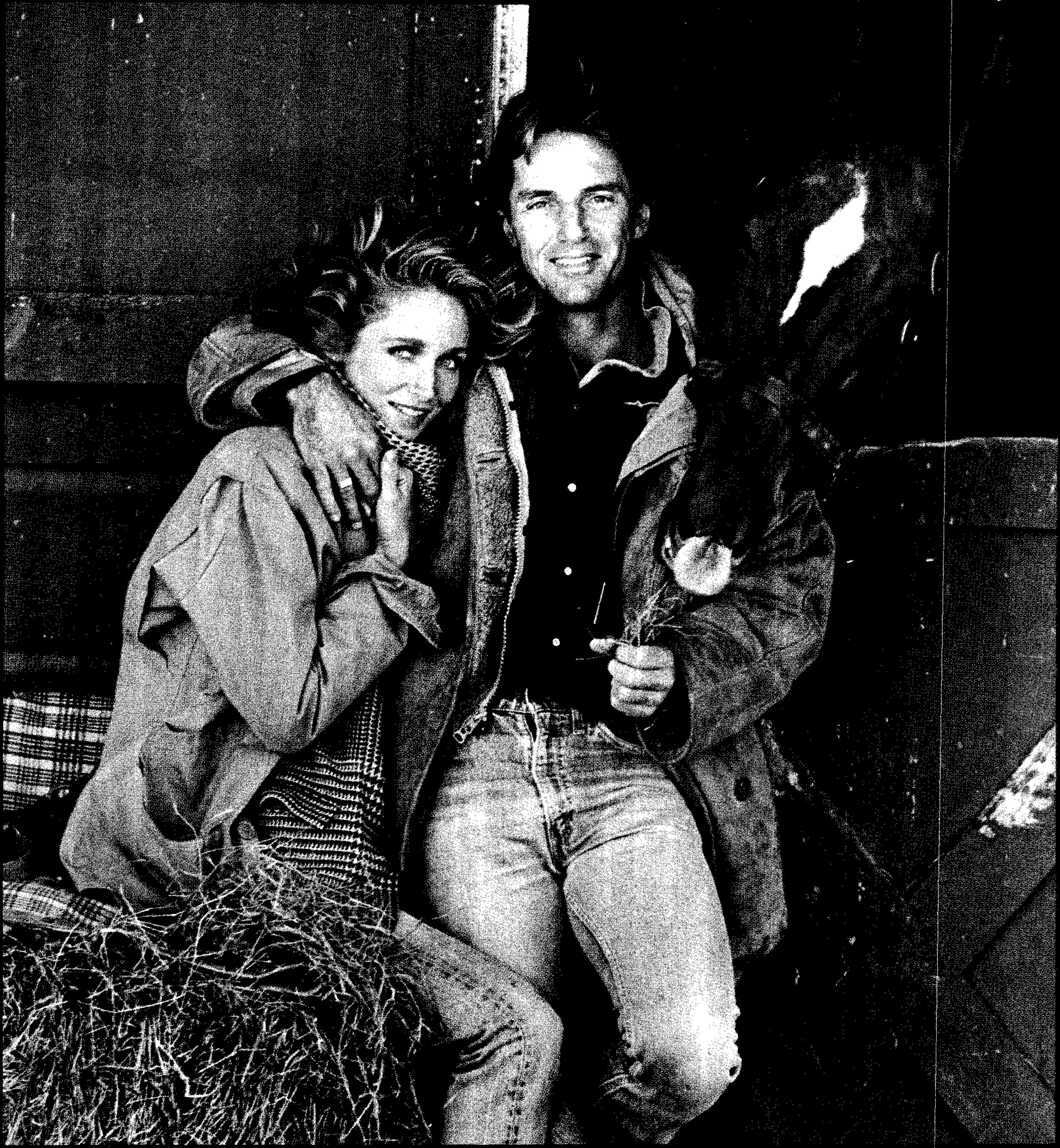

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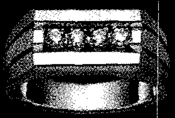

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wouldn't take anything else. I didn't understand that."

"Mom said there might be a notebook."

"There was a little diary. It's around here somewhere."

"Do you care if I have it?"

"I can't imagine what you want with it. There's not much in it. He told a lot more in his letters. He wrote the lovingest letters. I wouldn't take anything for them. But I'll look for that notebook when I get done here."

Sam went with Pap out to the barn to look for wire.

"What's wrong with that cat's ears?" she asked, pointing to a sore-eyed cat with scabby ears.

"I trimmed 'em. He had ear canker. If you trim it off, it'll heal, so I clipped about a quarter inch off of each one."

"I never heard of that."

"You do the same thing to rabbits. Why, I've seen cats with their ears trimmed down to a nub." He laughed —a hoarse chuckle. "Sam, you don't know nothing!" He took his work gloves, a hammer, and some nails from a toolshed next to the barn.

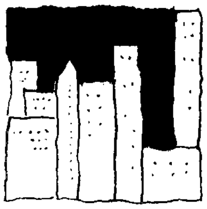
"Our cat never had ear canker," said Sam. "He's got fleas, though. They're about to drive Emmett crazy."

"That hound's got mange. I've got to mix up some sulfur and saltpeter and burnt crankcase oil and paint him when I get a chance," Pap said.

"Won't that kill him?"

"I doubt it. Sam, can you reach me them wire pliers on that shelf behind that sack of fertilizer?"

Sam was exploring in an old stall where she remembered her grandfather once raising a calf. This would have been where her father had raised calves when he was a boy. There were no cows here now. She handed Pap the wire pliers.



"We got too much fertilizer this year," he said, shaking his head.

Sam walked down a dusty lane with her grandfather. She was seeing the place her dad knew. She was seeing where her mother lived once for a few weeks, where Sam started growing in her belly. Her roots were here, and she had been here often enough for the place to be familiar, but not enough to really know it. She felt she was seeing it for the first time.

"I remember when Dwayne first brought Irene out here," Pap said. "She was just a skinny little squirt like you. Nothing embarrassed her. She went around asking me the name of everything. She got a kick out of Emma's hen-and-chickens cactuses, said they was like pincushions. Imagine that. She picked the biggest bunch of flowers. She went back in the fields along the fence rows and picked daisies and Queen Anne's lace and black-eyed Susans and I don't know what-all. I never would have thought of picking weeds like that. She was raised on a farm, so I was surprised she'd thought of picking them."

"She always liked flowers," Sam said. They were talking about Irene as though she were the one who had died, and when they talked about Dwayne they weren't specific. You should always be specific, Sam thought.

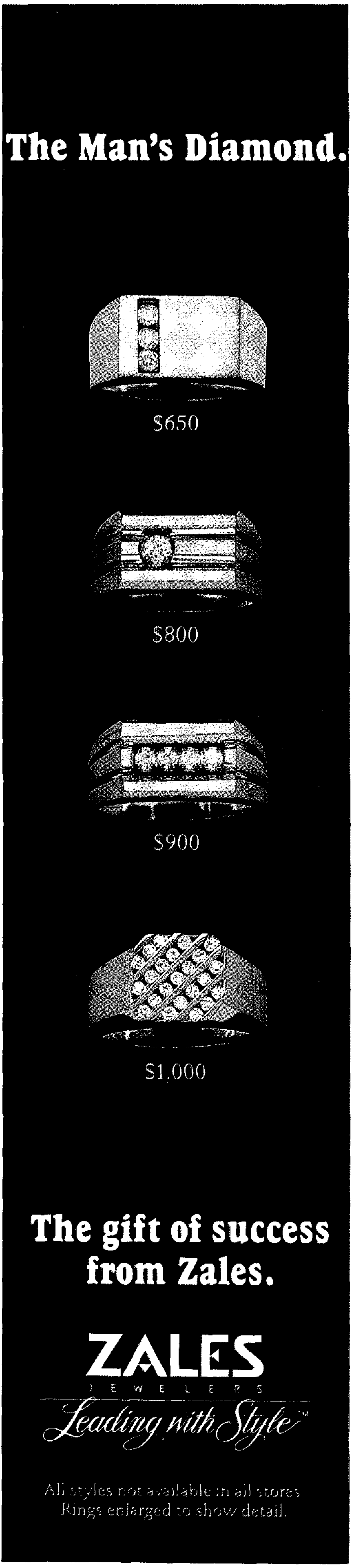
"Country kids are just like the city kids now," Pap said. "They've got more. And they have cars, so they can go running around. Used to, Saturday was when you went to town, but now they take off and go any day of the week."

They talked about Sam's new car for a while, and then Pap said, "Everybody always thought it was something that Dwayne left us such a gift. When you were born, I remember how proud everybody was." He hammered a nail into a fence post. "Everybody expected a boy, of course, but we loved you just the same."

"Everybody wished I was a boy," Sam said, crushing a clover head in her hand. "Did you know my daddy picked the name?" she asked. "He thought it was in the Bible."

"No. I didn't know that. Why, you learn something new every day. Well, I'll say!" He stroked his chin thoughtfully.

While her grandfather worked on the fence, Sam walked down by the creek. She had remembered some wild goose-plum trees in the creek. She found them, but she didn't see any fruit. The trees had honeysuckle vines on them. On a vine she saw a large green stinkbug with an orange spot and a figure eight on its back. Water striders pranced on the shallow pools of clear water in the creek bed. She used to call them Jesus bugs because of the way they walked on water. She looked around the farm, trying to see it in a new way, trying to see what her father had known, the world he knew before he went to Vietnam. These were his memories, what he took with him over there. She thought she could



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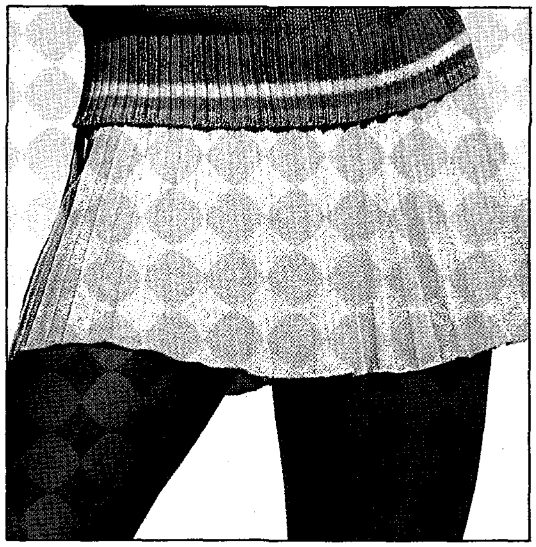

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comprehend it. Everything he knew was small and predictable: Jesus bugs, blue mold, hound dogs, fence posts. He *didn't know about the new* consolidated county high school, rock video, "M*A*S*H." He didn't know her.

At the house, the dog, outside his pen now, bowed lazily, then lay down in a patch of dirt he had dug in the shade near the flower bed. His back was covered with scabs. Sam recognized many of the flowers—tall blue stalks, pink droopy flowers, big round yellow faces—but she had no names for them. The rosebushes were insect-eaten. The lilies had dried up. The August sun was beating down. Sam recognized a plant with seedpods forming from some of the flowers. She remembered that those seedpods would explode when they turned brown, scattering their seeds. She remembered the plant's name—touch-me-not.

"I found that diary," Mamaw called to Sam from the porch. "You can have it, but I don't reckon it'll tell you anything. He just set down troop movements and weapons and things like that. It's not loving, like the letters he wrote back. Those was personal. Irene didn't even want this little book, but you can have it if you want it."

Sam reached for the brown spiral notebook. Mamaw was standing on the porch, and Sam was below her on the steps. Sam remembered reaching just this way at graduation when the principal handed her the rolled diploma. But inside the ribbon was a blank piece of paper. The real diplomas were mailed later, because they had come too late from the printer.

Mamaw said, "I remembered that I couldn't even read all of it, because I couldn't figure out his handwriting, so I don't expect it'll tell you anything, but at least you'll have something of his." She shooed a cat out the door. "Do you want us to take you out to the graveyard later?" Mamaw said.

"No, not today," Sam said, her eyes on the cat. "I've got to go somewhere."

"Whereabouts?"

"Paducah. I've got to go to Paducah."

THE mall was not crowded that afternoon. Shoppers called to each other across the wide corridors. A woman cried, "Wanda, you heifer! Wait for me!"

A man tried to pick Sam up. She was sitting on a bench beside some plants at the center of the two wings of the mall, reading her father's diary. She had a Coke and some chocolate-chip cookies. The man was wearing a Confederate-flag T-shirt that said, "I'm a Rebel and Damn Proud of It." Sam gave him such a mean look that he backed off.

The diary was hard to read. Mamaw was right about his handwriting, but Sam had always been very good at figuring out handwriting. It was a talent of hers. Dwayne had written in pencil, and the words staggered off the lined paper. Sam guessed he had written in the dark. His writing was small and squinched. It was true that there was a lot of perplexing gibberish about troop movements and lists of weapons—stuff that wouldn't have interested his parents, who would have wanted to see notes on the weather or the crops. But after several pages of brief notations like "May 3. Two klicks west, dug in late, shells coming in" and "Sappers spotted, M-79 grenade launchers, 40 rounds spent," all of which made little sense, the diary got more interesting:

July 3. Spent all day cutting trees up a hill. Got there and saw another hill and more trees. My hands are cracked and bleeding. Shelling at dark.

July 4. Letter from Irene. Baby kicking strong.

July 5. Smoked cigarettes in the dark, hiding them in helmets. Helmets used for everything but to shit in. Depressed but got out of it remembering our purpose here.

July 6. Marched all day. I was on point again. Getting used to it, the way you hold your rifle just so, so that you're always on the ready. Thinking about rabbit hunting. Miss those fall days.

July 7. C-rats, ham and lima beans coming out of ears and butt. We've all got direah. Cut trees, waded swamp. We need rain but my feet stay wet. Hot Shot in a rage. He works us like a team of dogs, but we're one fine team. Dug in late, overslept watch. Slept like a baby.

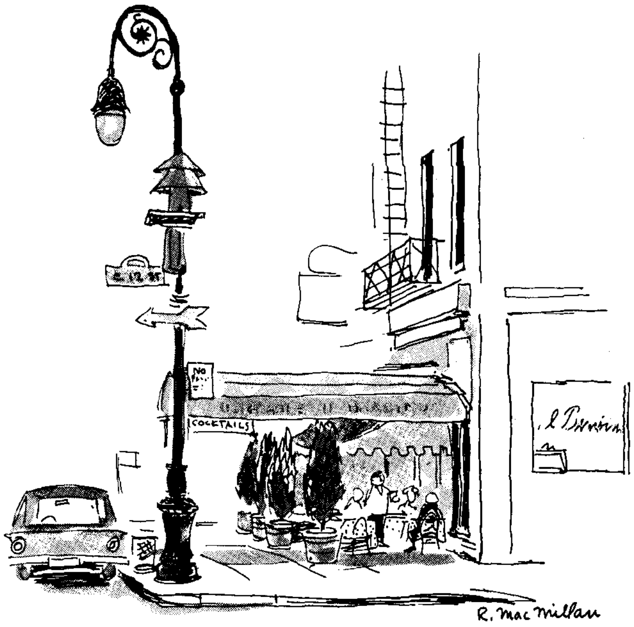
July 8. Useless day, holed up, waiting. Hot Shot says it won't be long. Still got the scours.

July 9. Ambushed. It was over in two seconds but seemed like two hours. My knees still shaking. Bobby G. got hit in the leg but not bad. Doc patched him up. We got two V.C. I think one of 'em's mine, but Jim C. claimed it too. We had a big day, big deal over whose it was. No letters. Irene seems too far away to be real. But it's all for her and the baby, or else why are we here? Joe's got 5 notches on his machetty. He's a short-timer. I'm sure I'll get one soon. It's the law of averages. Joe's asking for trouble though. He'll volunteer to walk point. He ain't afraid of Nothing. And Bob goes along so quiet like he knows more than the rest of us. Wouldn't say shit. I'm tired tonight. A good kind of tired. We got two. Two weeks out and finally we got two. We had cigarettes and felt wild.

July 13. Hot Shot says we're getting closer. We walked all day through swamp grass. Eddie was in front of me, making a trail in the grass, like a speed boat. He's solid black but he's okay. I never knew a nigger that quiet. He's not a show-off.

July 14. Chopper dropped off mail and socks. Letter from Irene. The pencil makes swishing noises and sounds so loud I'm afraid it'll draw Cong like flies. It's so dark you can't see anything but burning cigarettes. Chopper brought Luckies. You can hide a cigarette almost inside your mouth. Joe does it, makes me think of a flame eater at the carnival. If I saw a gook and didn't have any ammo, I'd take a cig. and twist it in his eyes and burn 'em out. Hot Shot says we're getting closer. It can't be long now. There's supposed to be a whole hidden base up north of here, but it seems like we're going in a circle. The choppers find them and tell us where to go so we can root them out. It seems like we might turn around and find he's following *us*. It's like what John was telling me yesterday. I said it was like rabbit hunting and he says yes but there's a difference. An animal behaves by instink. A rabbit runs in a jagged line to fool you. A deer runs fast to get away. They're made that way—by God—to protect themselves, to get away from their enemies. But they don't come hunting *you*. What if a rabbit came after you? Sneaking after you and popping out behind a bush with a big M-60? I can't think of any animal but a panther that would do that (but not with a M-60). Daddy grew up on Panther Creek and he always told tales of hearing that panther cry. It was like a woman crying, they said. Irene crying. I try to play like she's here in this hole with me but it won't work. When I get her in my mind good she floats away and I hear something, like a leaf swishing or somebody breathing, or the guys on watch trading places, and I'm right back here. And I wouldn't want her to be here and see this. I can't forget what I'm here for.

July 17. Two days ago, we come upon a dead gook rotting under some leaves, sunk into a little swamp-like place. They probably hadn't found it because it was covered by big banana leaves. Interesting to see the body parts broken down, like we studied in biology. It has a special stink. Dead gooks have a special stink, we know by now. Bobby G. poked a stick around in it and some teeth fell out. Darrel's carrying one for good luck. He says now he'll have special gook stink on him and that will protect him. Uncle B. used to go deer hunting with deer piss on him.



July 18. Hot Shot's so mad he could pop. Darrel had his gear all scattered around and Hot Shot cussed him out, said he had to be ready to up and move at drop of a hat. What if Charlie dropped in sudden? It would be like Sundays when company came and Mama went around grabbing all of Pap's clothes and all the toys strowed all over the living room. You got to be ready, said Hot Shot. Organization. We're relaxing too much. Nothing to do. No gooks. Somebody let out

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a big fart like a firecracker and you could hear it all the way to Hanoi. Just sending Charlie a warning, Darrel said. It made me think of cherry bombing people's mailboxes on Halloween. Great guys here. Hot Shot works us hard, like a team of mules, or over here they have water buffalos. You can't whip buffalos around the way you can a team of mules, or a team of G.I.s. We're one fine team. If Hot Shot didn't get so mad we wouldn't be half as good as we are. He really knows how to run us. Just like Coach Jones in basketball. We're talking him into re-enlisting. We say the free world needs him.

Aug. 4. Darrel got it. It was over with before we knew what was happening. Goddam, it was awful. I'll never forget it. Darrel went off in the bushes to take a shit and they got him. Pop-pop. We opened fire all around but didn't get anything. We just stood there firing and firing and Darrel had blood shooting out of his back and his mouth. The chopper lifted him out but it was too late. He lost too much blood. The medic was covered in his blood. If we run across some gooks, they're going to be gook puddin when I get through with them! Darrel was a good guy. This shouldn't have happened to him, of all people. That tooth wasn't any protection, that's for damn sure. Talk about scary.

Aug. 6. Chopper brought hot A's, turkey and dressing and cranberries. It wasn't Mama's but it tasted like manna from heaven and it did come out of the sky. We had cigarettes and went wild.

Aug. 8. Hot Shot's ready to climb trees he's so mad. He's burned up about Darrel and says we can't be that dumb again. If Hot Shot didn't get mad, he couldn't keep us going. I've dumped most of my pack, but I'm sore all over and I've got bites and scabs and direah and another guy has malaria but they won't take him out. Can't stop now though.

Aug. 10. Unreal thought. A baby. My own flesh and blood. Too tired to write.

Aug. 12. Feet look like boiled chicken's feet. We're almost there.

Aug. 14. Big surprise. Face to face with a V.C. and I won. Easier than I thought. But there wasn't time to think. It was so simple. At last.

Aug. 16. It's getting bad. My feet's killing me. They look like they're rotting off. It's dark and this notebook is balanced on my knee, makes me think of Mama riding little Donna on her knee. Ride a little horsey. Ride downtown. Ride a little horsey. Oops! Fall down. No cigarettes. The last time the bird brought Luckies we said we're lucky. Everybody laughed. Lucky to be alive. When I get back to the World, this will be like a dream, but right now the World is a dream. It's like trying to put those round pegs in the square holes in that test we did in school. If we get out of this alive, it'll be a miracle. Long gone, ain't I lucky? Long gone, from Kentucky. Song Irene always liked.

Sam felt sick. Her stomach churned, and she felt like throwing up. She could see and smell the corpse under the banana leaves. She had never seen banana leaves, but she thought she knew what they were like. Bananas had a sickly-sweet smell when they were too ripe and the insects stirred around them. She could smell that. She ate a chocolate-chip cookie, thinking it would settle her stomach. She recalled the dead cat she dug up once in Grandma's garden, and she realized her own insensitive curiosity was just like her father's. She felt humiliated and disgusted. The diary made her wonder what she would do in his situation. Would she call them gooks? She thought of how Emmett loved on Moon Pie, and she could not believe Emmett could have done what Dwayne had done in the war, yet she knew he must have. Even if Emmett was sorry, he didn't do anything to make up for it, the way a guy her mother knew had, a guy who killed a whole family of Vietnamese. She recalled Richard Pryor on TV saying he asked the murderer on Death Row at the Arizona Penitentiary, "Why did you kill the whole family?" The murderer's answer: "They was home!"

Her father hadn't said how he felt about killing the V.C. He just reported it, as though it were something he had to do sooner or later, like taking a test in school.

Mamaw and Pap must not have even read the diary. If they had read it, they would have realized that he smoked and drank and murdered. Maybe they read it but didn't want to remember their son that way. So they forgot. Or they made up a more pleasant story. Or they pretended they

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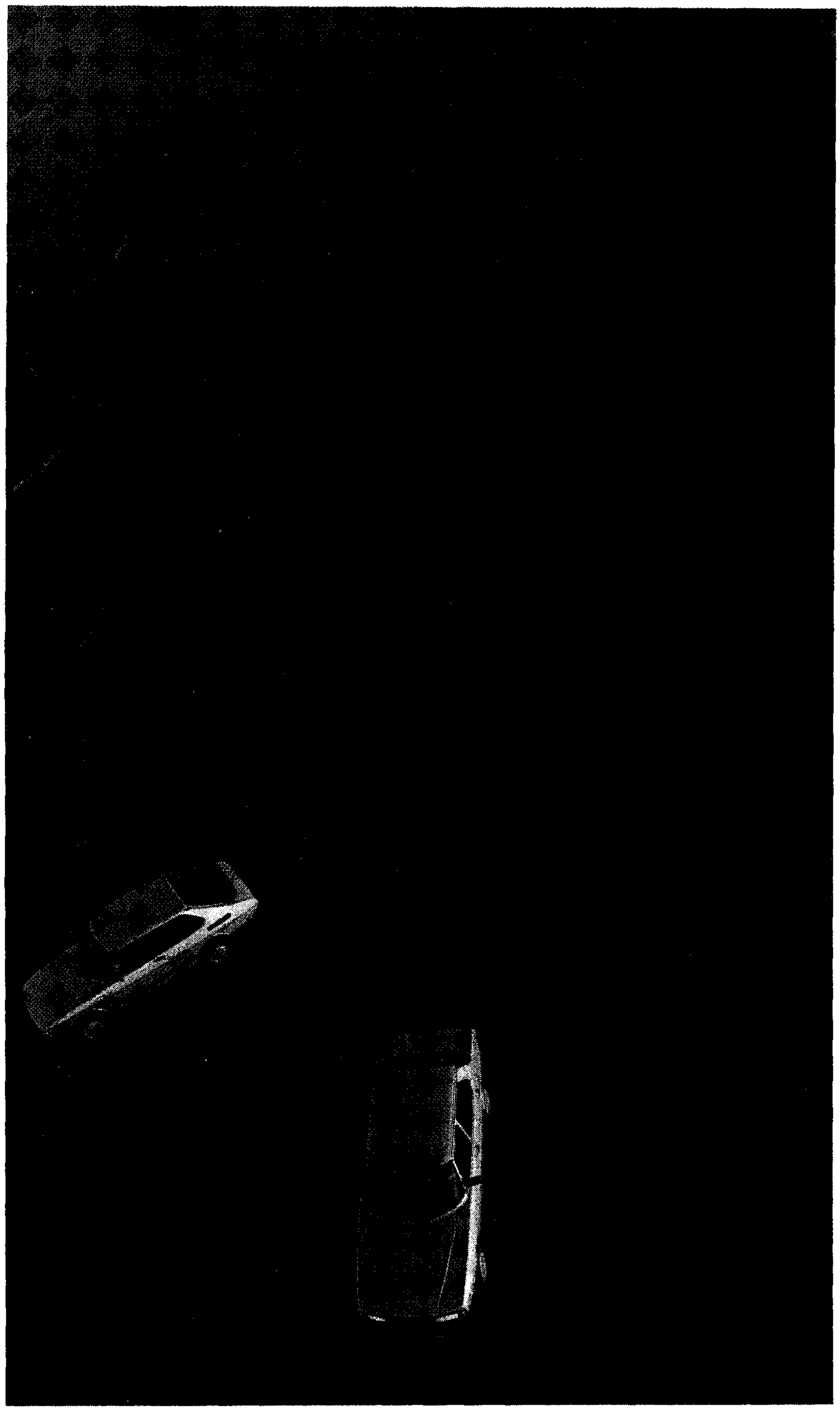

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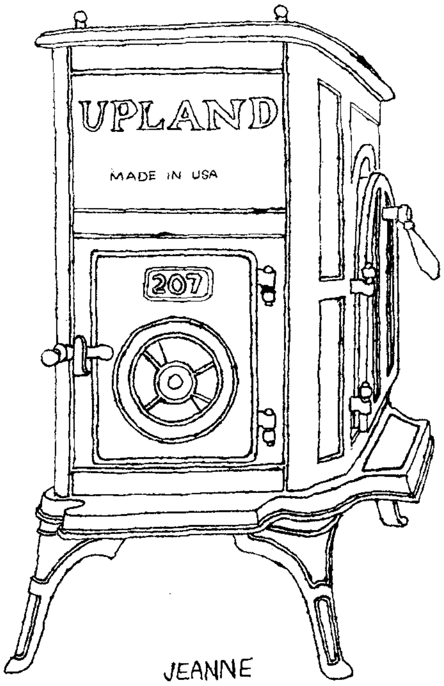
couldn't read his handwriting. But why did Mamaw give the notebook to Sam? Had Irene read it? Maybe they just took it for granted that in war there was killing. That was it. They didn't question it. Mamaw would probably find the fact that he smoked more upsetting.

She left the mall and drove toward home. She wanted the road to go on and on, so she could clear her mind, so she could think about what the diary meant. Or maybe there was nothing to figure out. Maybe she should just forget about her father, and dismiss the whole Hughes clan along with him. They were ignorant and country anyway. They lived in that old farmhouse with the decayed smell she always remembered it having—the smell of dirty farm clothes, soiled with cow manure. In their bathroom earlier, she had almost slipped on the sodden rug that lay rotting around the sweating commode. In the living room, the television was missing a leg, and a complicated old antenna—all claws and a fan of rods—sat in a corner, looking like a monster from outer space. The contraption was an effort to pick up cable so that Pap could catch the Wildcats' basketball games. Mamaw picked peas in a rusty bucket with a rag plug stopping up a hole. Sam couldn't get the sensations out of her head: the mangy dog, the ugly baby, the touch-me-nots, the blooming weeds, the rusty bucket, her dumb aunt Donna. The cat with its ears clipped made her want to cry. And the diary disgusted her, with the rotting corpse, her father's shrivelled feet, his dead buddy, those sickly-sweet banana leaves. She had a morbid imagination, but it had always been like a horror movie, not something real. Now everything seemed suddenly so real it enveloped her, like something rotten she had fallen into, like a skunk smell, but she felt she had to live with it for a long time before she could get a bath. In the jungle, they were nasty and couldn't take a bath.

She didn't know how she could face Emmett now.

Moon Pie, lounging under Mrs. Biggs' forsythia bush, yawned at Sam when she slammed the car door. Emmett was usually home at this time of day, fixing supper, but the door was locked. He wasn't expecting her back from Mamaw's until tomorrow. Luckily, she had a key with her. When she opened the door, a harsh, overpowering chemical smell rushed at her, instead of the usual stale smell of cigarettes. What in the hell? Emmett couldn't have put his head in a gas oven, she thought. Their stove was electric. Her second thought was Agent Orange, although it didn't smell like oranges. She gulped a deep breath of air from outside and rushed in. When she called, "Emmett!" her air rushed out. She gulped some more fresh air and raced around downstairs, calling for him. Then she found the source of the smell. In the center of the living room, between the TV and the couch, a spray can had been set on a kitchen chair. She snatched it up and read the label. It was a flea bomb, one of those spray cans that could be locked in a spray position. It was empty now. Emmett had set off a flea bomb and left the house, as though he had thrown a hand grenade inside and run away. It was just like him to do something secretive like that, without even mentioning it. It made her furious. He was so paranoid about those fleas.

She paced up and down the porch and tried to think. She had opened both doors to get cross-ventilation. Then she had an idea. She went to the car and ripped a blank page out of her father's diary. She wrote Emmett a note and left it on the refrigerator, under a tomato magnet. The note said, "You think you can get away with everything because you're a V.N. vet, but you can't. On the table is a diary my daddy kept. Mamaw gave it to me. Is that what it was like over there? If it was, then you can just forget about me. Don't try to find me. You're on your own now. Goodbye. Sam."



Sam took a deep breath of fresh air and raced upstairs. The air in her room was tolerable. She opened the window, then searched the closet for her sleeping bag and backpack from Girl Scouts. She crammed some shorts and T-shirts into the pack, then grabbed some jeans and her cowboy boots. She got Emmett's space blanket and poncho from his footlocker. Downstairs, with a new breath from outside, she searched for food to take with her. They didn't have any ham and lima beans, so she took pork and beans. G.I.s lived out of cans. They even had canned butter. She put a can of potted meat and some Doritos and granola bars in the pack, along with some Granny Cakes and a can of smoked oysters. She loaded a six-pack cooler with Pepsi and cheese and grape juice. She found some plastic utensils she had saved from the Burger Boy. Her job was supposed to start in two weeks. Where would she be in two weeks?

She imagined that the smell was Agent Orange. Her lungs were soaking up dioxin, and molecules of it were embedding themselves in the tissues, and someday it would come back to haunt her, like the foods that gave Emmett gas.

Probably dioxin wasn't in flea bombs. But for all anyone knew, they could have a chemical just as deadly. Those chemical companies didn't care.

On the way out of town, she had the appalling thought that Moon Pie might have sneaked back in the house. But she was almost sure he was still under that bush when she pulled out of the driveway.

If men went to war for women, and for unborn generations, then she was going to find out what they went through. Sam didn't think the women or the unborn babies had any say in it. If it were up to women, there wouldn't be any war. No, that was a naïve thought. When women got power, they were just like men. She thought of Indira Gandhi and Margaret Thatcher. She wouldn't want to meet those women out in the swamp at night.

What would make people want to kill? If the U.S.A. sent her to a foreign country, with a rifle and a heavy backpack, could she root around in the jungle, sleep in the mud, and shoot at strangers? How did the Army get boys to do that? Why was there war?

Her dad had no sense of humor. At

least Emmett had a sense of humor. Dwayne couldn't spell, and his handwriting was bad.

Emmett's fear of fleas was silly. Sam wasn't even afraid of spending the night at Cawood's Pond, sleeping out on the ground. Cawood's Pond was so dangerous the Boy Scouts wouldn't even camp out there, but it was the last place in western Kentucky where a person could really face the wild. That was what she wanted to do.

Along the secondary road leading to the pond, bulldozers had been at work, dredging the outer reaches of the swamp. Sam drove up the bumpy lane and left the car in the center of the clearing. Her shoes crunched on the gravel. Down the path to the boardwalk, she paused at a stump. Inside the hollow, a million tiny black ants were working on a bit of plastic, ripping it up into non-biodegradable tidbits and marching off with it. Emmett imagined the fleas were like that, crawling all over him while he slept. She thought he must have been having a flashback when he tossed in the flea-bomb grenade and ran away. The fleas were the Vietnamese. How often had she heard the enemy soldiers compared to ants, or other creatures too numerous to count? She remembered someone saying that the G.I.s would fight for a position and gain it and then the next day there would be a thousand more of the enemy swarming around them.

The Vietnamese used anything the Americans threw away—bomb casings and cigarette butts and helicopter parts and Coke cans. It was like Emmett rigging up things in the house. It was Vietnamese behavior, she thought, making do with what he could scrounge. The Vietnamese could make a bomb out of a Coke can.

Emmett had helped kill those Vietnamese, the same way he killed the fleas, the same way people killed ants. It was easy, her father wrote. But the enemy always returned, in greater numbers. Men were nostalgic about killing. It aroused something in them.

The fleas would come back. People in cities had roaches, super-bugs resistant to chemicals.

At Cawood's Pond, bugs rose up like steam from the swamp water.

Emmett set off the flea bomb just as casually as he would have launched a mortar into the sky, the way the soldiers did in the war, the way he pumped the firing button on the Atari.

She remembered when he used to shout in his sleep. He was after Charlie. There weren't any Vietcong to hunt down now, no hills to capture, no bases to defend, but he was still doing it. He was out to kill, in spite of himself, like a habit he couldn't break. It was sick. He was all the time reliving that war. Men wanted to kill. That's what men did, she thought. It was their basic profession.

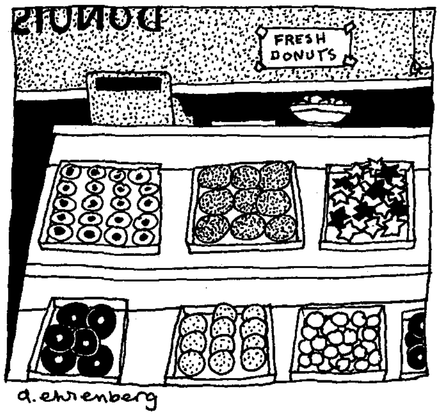
Granddad killed Japanese soldiers in World War II. Her father had been killed because that was the way the game was played. Some lived and some died. There was no other conclusion to be drawn.

Women didn't kill. That was why her mother had tried to forget about Dwayne. Honoring the dead meant honoring the cause. Irene was saying he was dead and it meant nothing. He went to fight and he got killed and that was the end of him. Sam thought, To hell with all of them—Lonnie, her dad, her uncle, her grandfathers, Lorenzo Jones.

She waited on the boardwalk, sitting there for a long time, quietly, until birds flew by unself-consciously. This was what Emmett did, as he watched and waited, like a spider hiding in a web. A big bird whooshed through the swamp like a reconnaissance chopper, and she caught a glimpse of brown. Then she heard a blue jay squawking. The blue jay was teasing a squirrel. She saw some sparrows. She wanted to know what the big deal was, waiting for birds. It was what hunters did.

She was a runaway. There was no runaway hot line out here. Emmett had run away once, too, to Lexington, so she felt justified. It wasn't as though she were running away to New York to be a prostitute in a dope ring. Her English teacher who thought Thoreau's retreat to Walden Pond was such a hot idea would probably approve. If it was in a book, there was something to it. But in Sam's opinion Thoreau was paranoid.

That rotting corpse her dad had found invaded her mind—those banana leaves, reeking sweetly. She knew that whenever she had tried to imagine Vietnam she had had her facts all wrong. She couldn't get hickory trees and maples and oaks and other familiar trees, like these cypresses at Cawood's Pond, out of her head. They probably didn't have these trees over there. Rice paddies weren't real to her. She thought of tanks knocking down the jungle and tigers sitting under bushes. Her notions came from the movies. Some vets blamed what they did on the horror of the jungle. What did the jungle do to them? Humping the boonies. Here I am, she thought. In country.

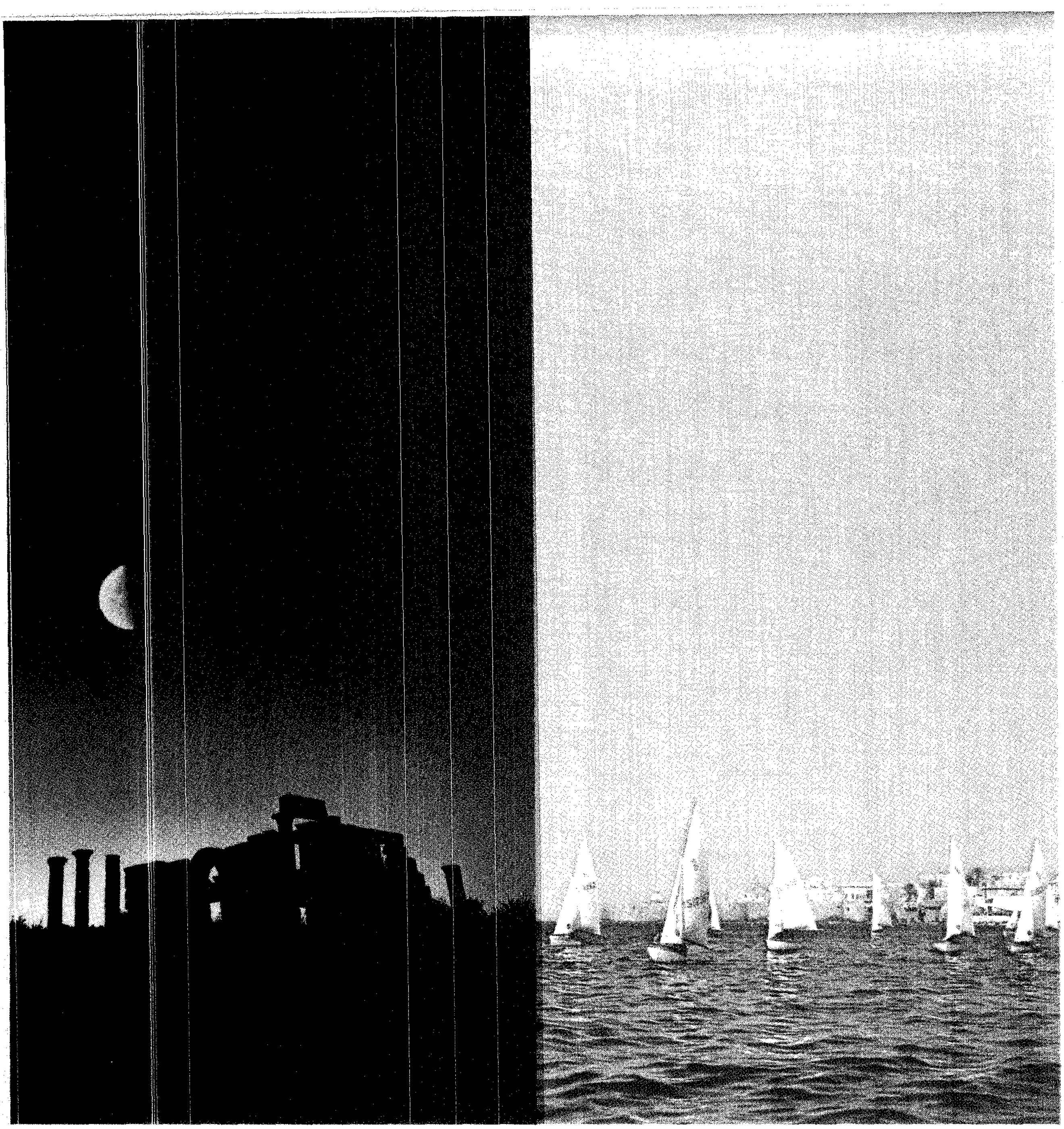


Cawood's Pond was famous for snakes, but it also had migrating birds—herons, and sometimes even egrets, Emmett claimed. She saw the egret so often in her mind she almost thought she had really seen it. It was white, like a stork. Maybe her father had seen egrets in Vietnam and thought they were storks. The stork bringing her. Emmett went over there soon after, as though he were looking for that stork, something that brought life. Emmett didn't look hard enough for that bird. He stayed at home and watched TV. He hid. He lived in his little fantasy world, she thought. But Sam meant to face facts. This was as close to the jungle as she could get, with only a VW.

A blue jay fussed overhead. A fish splashed. She leaned over the railing of the boardwalk and watched the Jesus bugs. The place was quiet, but gradually the vacancy of the air was filled with a complex fabric of sounds: insects and birds, and occasional whirring wings and loud honks of large birds.

The insects were multiplying, as though they were screwing and reproducing right in the air around her. A gnat flew into her eye. She went back to the car and put on her jeans and boots. She hadn't brought any Bug Off. With the space blanket and her backpack and the picnic cooler, she followed a path through the jungle. The cypress knees, little humps of the roots sticking up, studded the swamp, and some of them even jutted up on the path. She had to walk carefully. She was walking point. The cypress knees were like land mines. There would be an invisible thread stretched across the path to trigger the mine. She waded through elephant grass, and in the distance there was a rice paddy.

She dropped her things in a clearing



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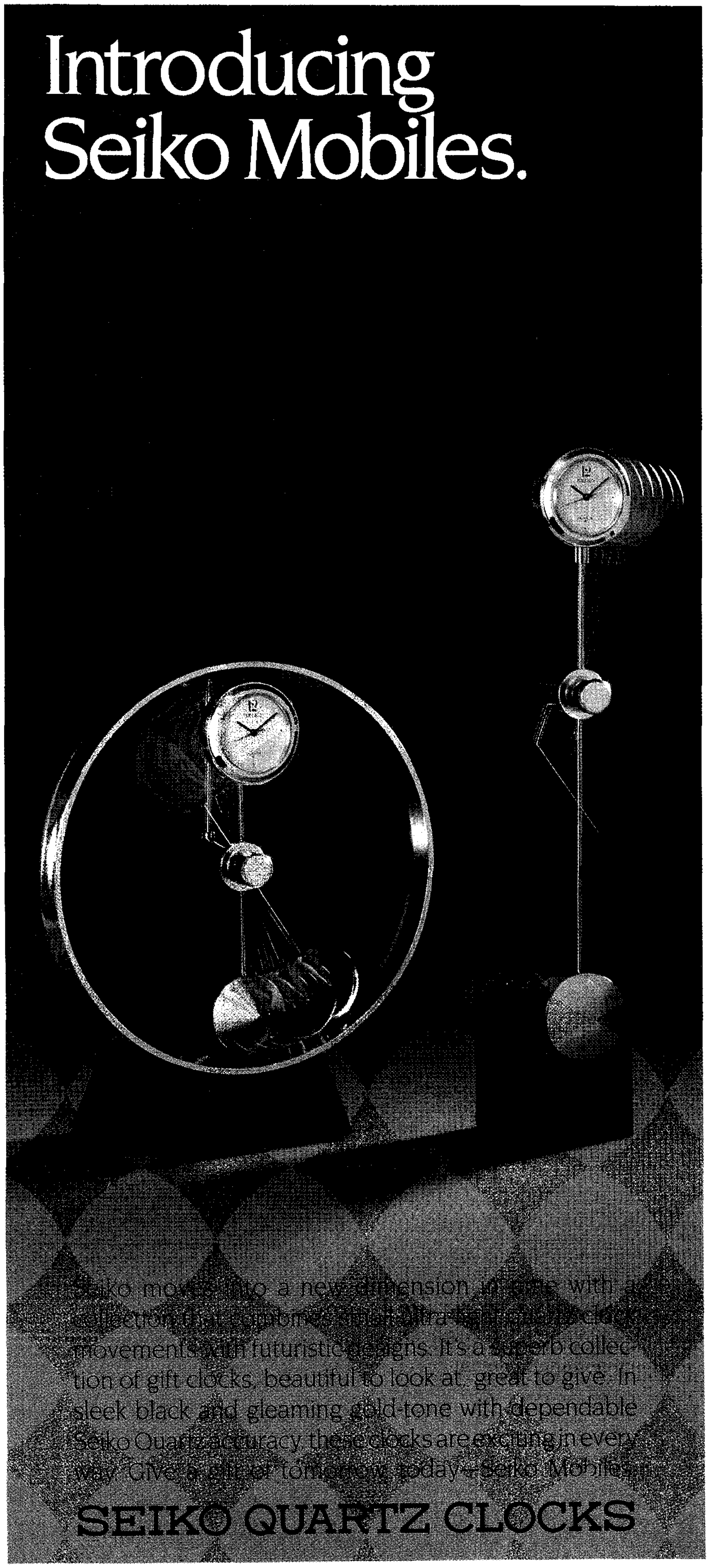
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and returned to the boardwalk for a while, sitting on a pillow she had thought to bring from the couch—a little square of foam rubber covered with dirty green velours. She watched for snakes. They would be out in the water—water moccasins, no doubt—and their triangular heads would leave a V mark in the water. A large turtle perched on a log. It was probably too late in the day for snakes, she thought. Snakes needed sun to heat up their blood. She remembered that from a *National Geographic* special.

Before dark, she hauled her stuff farther down the path and fixed up her camp. She had to search for a flat place that wasn't interrupted by cypress knees. She found a tall oak tree that had a flat clearing under it. This area had once been water, but now the water level was lower and the ground had dried out. Even the mosquitoes seemed less annoying here. The tree had a bank of moss and a curtain of ferns. She spread out the space blanket and waited for dark while she ate pork and beans and some cheese and crackers, with a Pepsi from the cooler. In the dark, the snipers couldn't find her. She would be invisible, and no one could find her. No one, she thought, except a creature with an acute sense of smell.

Here she was, humping the boonies. The smells returned. The flea bomb, the banana leaves, the special gook stink. If she were a soldier, she would be wading through that swamp, with snakes winding themselves around her legs.

There were patches of ooze, like quicksand, that swallowed up people in the swamp. But she was on solid ground under this tree. There couldn't be a sinkhole next to a tree.

She pictured Emmett standing silhouetted against the Vietnam sky, standing at the edge of a rice paddy, watching a bird fly away. In the background, working in the fields, were some peasants in bamboo hats. Emmett kept watching the bird fly into the distance and the *beat-beat-beat* of a helicopter interrupted the scene, moving in slowly on it. The peasants did not look up, and Emmett kept staring, as though the bird had been transformed into the chopper and had returned to take him away. Then in one corner of the scene a bomb exploded, sending debris and flame sky-high, but the peasants kept working, bending over their rows of rice.

Did rice grow in rows? Was it bushy, like soybeans? No, it was like grass. It was like wheat growing in water.

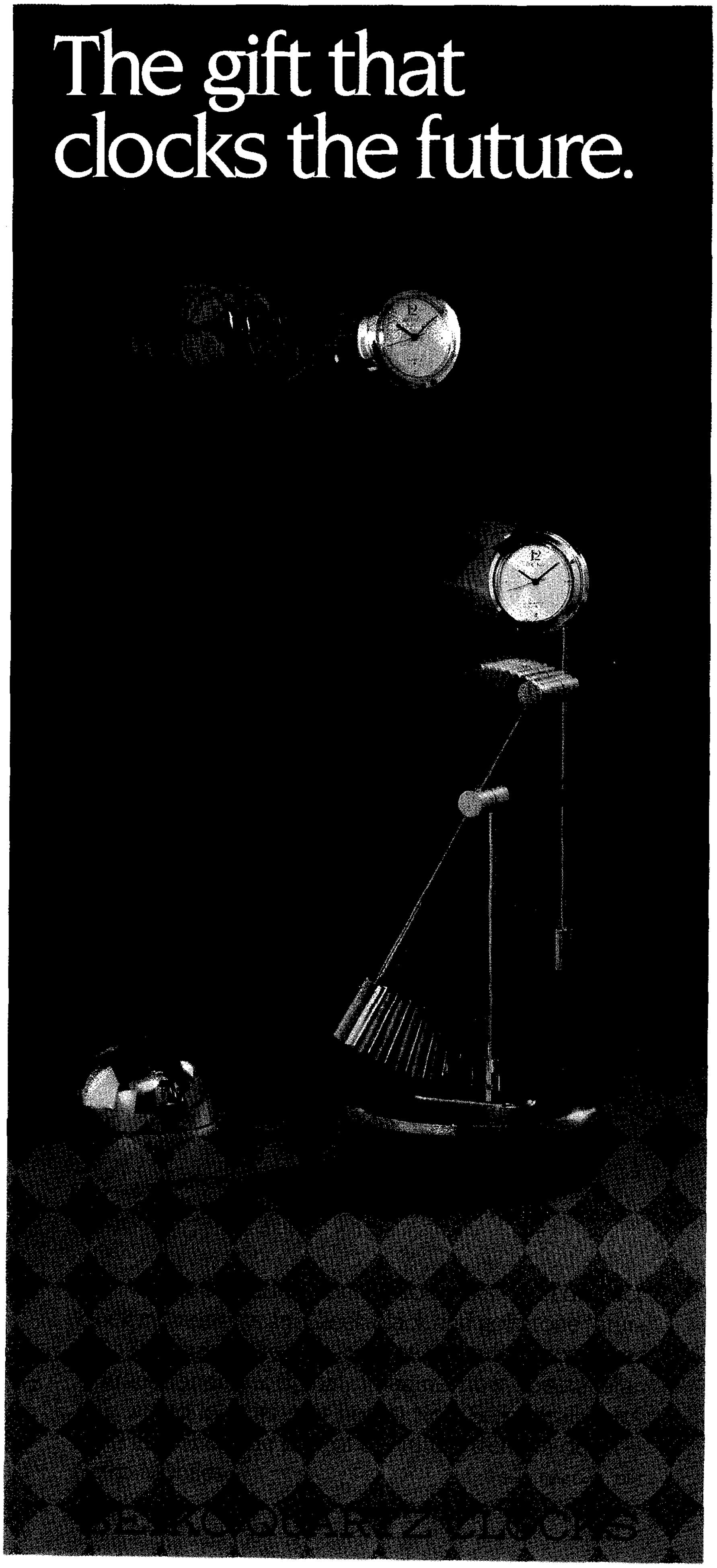
She felt so stupid. She couldn't dig a foxhole even if she had to, because she didn't have the tools. And could she actually dig a foxhole? She didn't know. The way Emmett had worked on his ditch for so long had irked her so much that she hadn't taken it seriously. But it might be handy to know how to dig in. It occurred to her that in this swamp any hole would fill up with water.

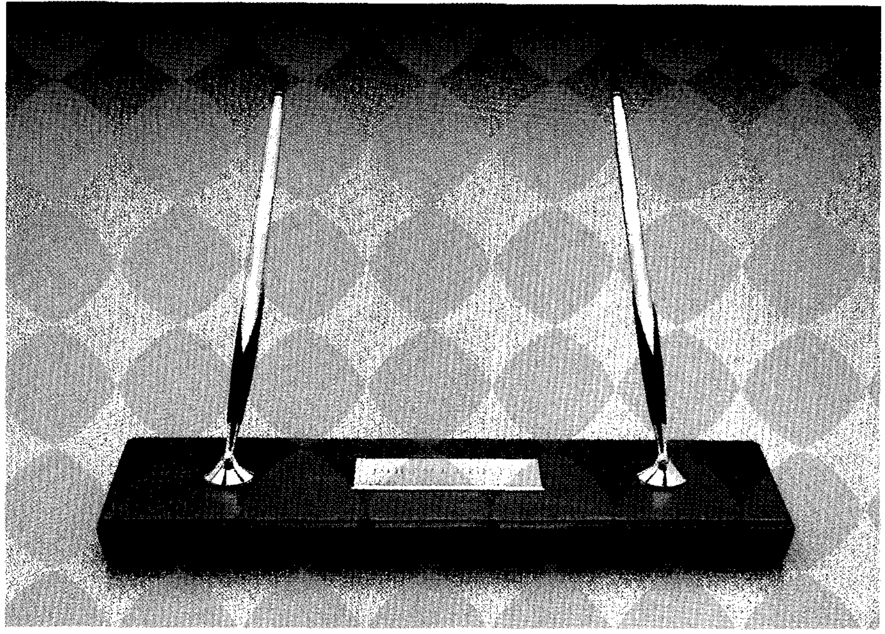
In Vietnam, the soldiers wouldn't have had a safe boardwalk. They would have waded through the swamp, with leeches sucking on them and big poisonous jungle snakes brushing their legs, and the splash of water would have betrayed their position. They had to creep. They had to go with the natural sound of the water and hold their breath if they saw a snake. A startled peep could mean the end. They couldn't afford to be cowards. She wondered if there were alligators in Nam. Vietnam had a monsoon climate, Emmett had said. Sam remembered monsoons from geography.

She ate a Granny Cake. Each bite was a loud smack, like a breaking leaf. The bullfrogs had started bellyaching, like Emmett with a gas attack. It was amazing how long you could sit out in the wild and still not see many animals. They know I'm here, she thought. Even the squirrels know I'm here. Squirrels are always on the other side of the tree. You go around the tree and they sneak around to the other side. That's why you need a squirrel dog to hunt squirrels, Granddad Smith had told her. A fice is best, he said.

And then something happened. It started with a chirping sound, and then some scrapes. She could see movement through some weeds on the side of the entrance to the boardwalk where the bank sloped down to the swamp. She saw a face, a face with beady eyes. It scared her. It was a V.C. Then she saw a sharp nose and streaks around the eyes. It was a raccoon. As she watched, the raccoon came into view, and then she saw a baby raccoon, and then another. They were large, almost grown, but still fuzzy. They climbed down the bank and stood in the water and drank. The mother nuzzled them. Behind her, two others wriggled down the bank.

For a long time, Sam watched as the babies chirped and the mother poked her nose at them, trying to round them





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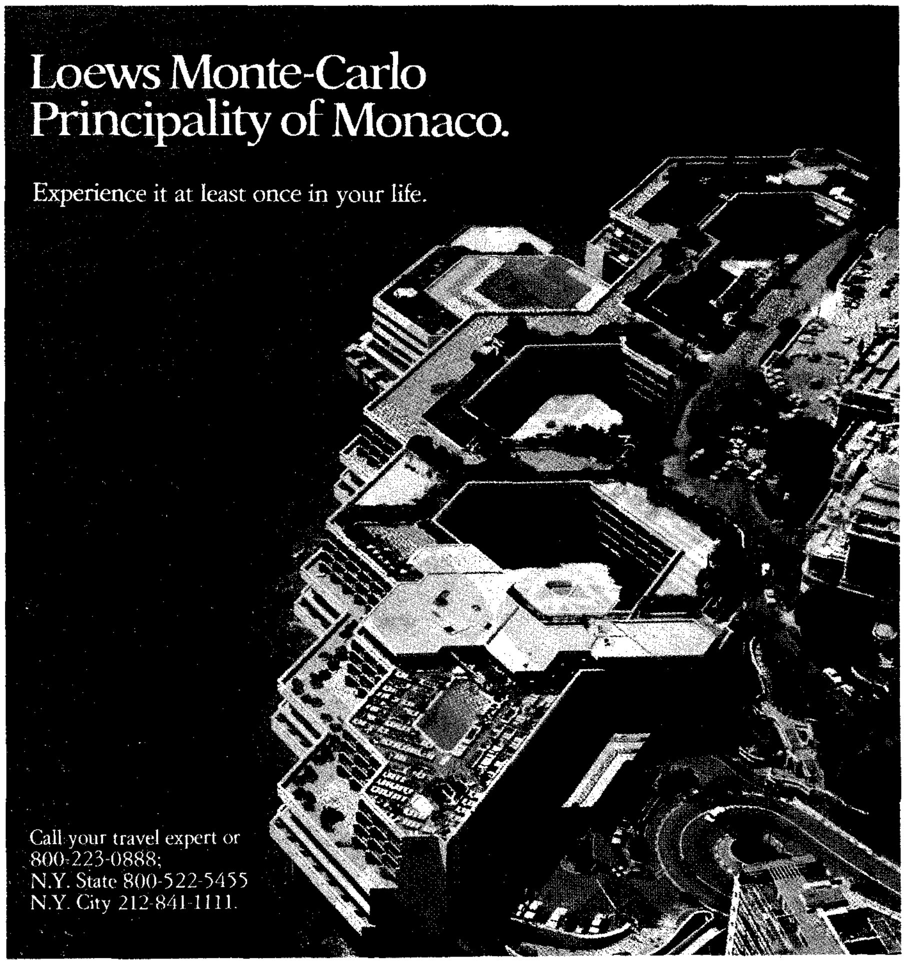

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up, to go back up the bank. She led two of them up and returned for the others, but then the first two followed her down again. It took her about ten minutes to get them rounded up. Twice, she stared straight at Sam. And when she had all the babies together, she led them away, through the underbrush.

After a while, there was a pattern of recognition in the night noises. There were voices, messages, in the insect sounds. "Who's next?" they said. Or "Watch out." She recognized the owls. Like the V.C., they conducted their business at night. Sam crouched on the space blanket and thought about what people would think if they knew where she was. Lonnie would be totally disgusted with her. His mother would think Sam had lost her brains. Grandma would have a heart attack just at the idea of the snakes. Sam enjoyed thinking of their reactions. Maybe her mother would think the idea wasn't so ridiculous. Her mother had done braver things. A frog belly-ooped. Sam remembered that Emmett used to go frog-gigging with Granddad at his pond. She heard rustling weeds and chirps and water splashing.

There weren't any people out here, so there was really nothing to be afraid of.

First watch. She wouldn't sleep. She'd stay on watch. The G.I.s stayed awake in the frightening night, until they fell asleep like cats, ready to bolt awake. It was hot inside the sleeping bag, but outside the bag the mosquitoes plucked at her skin, whining their little song. When she came to the pond before, with Lonnie and Emmett, it had seemed safe. Did the soldiers feel safer with each other? Of course, she could retreat to the VW. VWs were watertight, so they would be bugtight, too.

It hit her suddenly that this nature preserve in a protected corner of Kentucky wasn't like Vietnam at all. The night sky in Vietnam was a light show, Emmett had said once. Rockets, parachute flares, tracer bullets, illumination rounds, signal flares, searchlights, pencil flares. She tried to remember the descriptions she had read. It was like fireworks. And the soundtrack was different from bugs and frogs: the *whoosh-beat* of choppers, *the scream of jets, the thunder-boom* of artillery rounds, the mortar rounds, random bullets and bombs and explosions. The rock-and-roll sounds of war.

It was growing darker. She

wouldn't find that bird in the dark. She recalled the poem from school about the man who had to wear a dead albatross around his neck. The man in the poem was sorry he had shot the albatross, and he went around telling everybody at a wedding about it, like a pregnant woman thrusting her condition on everyone. Sam's mother had been like that earlier this year. "You'd think she was the only person on earth who had ever had a baby," Grandma had said. But women would never really behave like that guy with the bird around his neck. Women were practical. They would bury a dead bird when it started to stink. They wouldn't collect teeth and ears for souvenirs. They wouldn't cut notches on their machetes. Sam kept thinking about the albatross, trying to remember how the poem went. Then chills rushed over her. Soldiers murdered babies. But women did too. They ripped their own unborn babies out of themselves and flushed them away, squirming and bloody. The chills wouldn't stop.

In the deepening dark, she struggled against Dracula images invading her mind. The soundtrack in the back of her mind, she realized, was from "Apocalypse Now"—the Doors moaning ominously, "This is the end . . . the children are insane."

It must have been years since she had gone so long without listening to a radio.

DAWN washed over the swamp, along with a misty fog. It was cool. The clatter of birds was like a three-alarm fire. Everything seemed alarmed by the new day. Sam lay very still on the space blanket and looked around her slowly. Her watch said five-fifteen. The soldiers would have been up before first light, creeping around, pulling up camp. She had survived.

She had many large bites on her body. One on her leg was bright red and inflamed, like a rash. She peed on a honeysuckle vine, and some splashed on poison ivy. She splattered a nondescript, hard-shelled bug crawling along.

As quietly as she could, she got some grape juice out of the cooler. She drank the juice and ate a granola bar. If she were a soldier, she'd drink hot chocolate or coffee from her canteen cup.

She cleaned up her camp. She was learning to be quiet. She could fold her sleeping bag silently. She closed the lid

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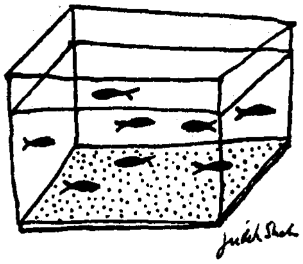
of the picnic cooler in slow motion. She had survived. But she didn't know what to do. She wished that bird would come. If the bird came, then she would leave.

The quality of dawn was different from the quality of dusk. Dusk lingered, and went through stages of dimness, but dawn was swift and pervasive. There must be some scientific principle behind that, she thought.

Before long, the sun blasted through the swamp. Sam actually saw some glowing rays hitting the path like those rays in religious paintings, like the ones she had seen in her Aunt Bessie's *Upper Room* magazines. Sam didn't think there was any upper room. Life was here and now. Her father was dead, and no one cared.



At seven-thirty, she heard noises. Low scratchings of gravel—maybe a dog, or some deer. She sat behind the tree, out of sight of the clearing, and waited as the noises grew louder. She wondered if it was Emmett, looking for her. Or was it a hunter? If a hunter saw her move, she might get shot. Hunters would shoot anything that moved. They were always shooting each other, mistaking each other for turkeys or deer.

There were peculiar new rustlings, something creeping, a sort of shuffle. It couldn't be a rapist, she thought. Rapists didn't go out into the wilderness, where there weren't likely to be any women to rape. They were calculating. Sam was defenseless. She looked around for rocks and sticks. She felt inside her backpack for a weapon. She had the can of smoked baby oysters with a roll-key opener. Hurriedly, she worked to create a weapon with the sharp edge of the can. The smell of smoked oysters sickened her. Too late, she realized the smell would give away her position. She tried to remember what she had been told about self-defense. Jab his eyes out with a key and knee him in the balls. She could take the open can, with its dangerous edge, and smash oysters all over his face and cut his nose.

The birds grew quieter, and the footsteps were on the boardwalk. She should have made her camp farther in the woods. What an idiotic thing to happen, she thought—to face the terror of the jungle and then meet a rapist. It would be like that scene in "Apocalypse Now" where the soldiers met a tiger, the last thing they expected in the guerrilla-infested jungle.

The footsteps on the boardwalk grew louder. Sam closed the zipper on her backpack, inching it along. She intended to leave the path and creep through the jungle back to the car. But it seemed a cheat to have a car for escape. She should have had a foxhole, with broken branches over it, to hide in. But the V.C. would know the jungle, and they would see where she had been. They would see the picnic cooler. The V.C. rapist-terrorist was still at the boardwalk. A bird flew over but she didn't dare glance at it. Its shadow fell on the bushes.

Here she was in a swamp where an old outlaw had died, and someone was stalking her. In her head, the Kinks were singing, "There's a little green man in my head," their song about paranoia. But this was real. A curious pleasure stole over her. This terror was what the soldiers had felt every minute. They lived with the possibility of unseen eyes of snipers. They crept along, pointing the way with their rifles, alert to land mines, listening, always listening. They were completely alive, every nerve on edge, and sleep, when it came, was like catnapping. No nightmares in the jungle. Just silent terror. During the night, she had stayed awake in the dark swamp, watching and waiting. She could make out faint rings of lights and winking lightning bugs. She put herself in Moon Pie's place. In Emmett's place. She had fantasized Tom there with her in her sleeping bag, the way her father had tried to imagine her mother. But Tom floated away. She was in her father's place, in a foxhole in the jungle, with a bunch of buddies, all breathing quietly, daring to smoke in their quiet holes, eating their C rations silently, their cold beans. She remembered Emmett eating cold split-pea soup from the can. She felt more like a cat than anything, small and fragile and very alert to movement, her whiskers flicking and her pupils widening in the dark. It was a new way of seeing.

Now she felt no rush of adrenaline, no trembling of knees. She knew it was because she didn't really believe this was real, after all. It couldn't be happening to her. In a few moments, everything would be clear and fine.

Her breathing was silent. Not even

her eyes moved. She could see bushes stir as the rapist approached. He had left the boardwalk and was heading down the path in her direction. Her only hope was to remain hidden, with the can of oysters ready to cut his eyes out. The greasy oysters leaked onto her fingers.

A leaf moved, a color flashed. Someone whistled a tune, "Suicide Is Painless." This was a joke, after all, for it was only Emmett, in an old green T-shirt and green fatigues. He was empty-handed. His running shoes were wet with dew and his hair was uncombed. She stood up, feeling like a jack-in-the-box. In Vietnam, this scene would never have happened. It would always be the enemy behind a bush.

"Hey, Emmett," she said.

"What are you doing here?"

"How did you know I was here?"

"I saw your car out there."

"I know that. But how did you know my car would be here?"

"Just a guess."

"How'd you get here?"

"Walked."

Her knees still weren't trembling. She hadn't been scared. She marched ahead of him on the path, and he trailed after her. She had her backpack, and he had grabbed the cooler. She said, "It was crazy to walk all the way out here."

"Jesus F. Christ, Sam!" Emmett yelled suddenly. "You worried me half to death! Crazy? I'd say it was crazy to camp out here. I thought you'd gone off the deep end. Man, I thought you'd lost it."

Sam reached her car and opened the door and set her stuff in the back seat. The windows had mist on them. The car inside seemed damp and cool. It must not be watertight, after all. Emmett was haggard and unshaved, and his T-shirt was dirty. The smoke from his cigarette flooded the swamp, obliterating the jungle smells.

"You scared me," he said. "I was afraid of what you might do. You might have considered that some people would be worried about you."

"Ha! I'd talk if I's you. At least I left a note."

"I was worried. I was scared you'd get hurt."

"You didn't have to come after me."

Emmett sat on a front fender and put his hands on his face. He was trembling, and his teeth chattered. A bird flew by and Emmett didn't look up. It was a Kentucky cardinal, a bril-

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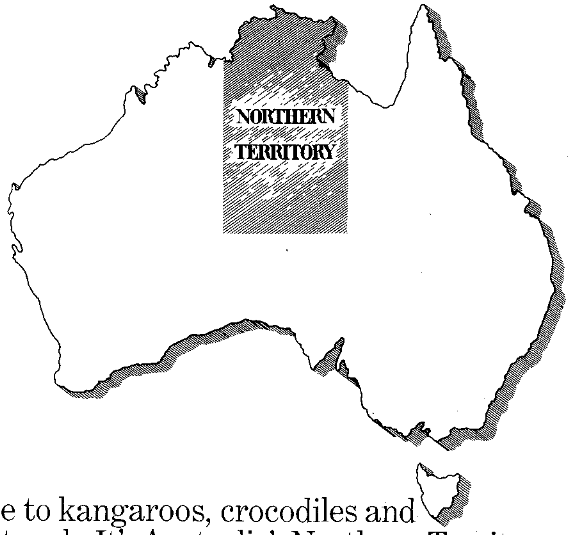

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liant surprise, a flash of red, like a train signal.

"What were you doing out here?" Emmett asked.

"Humping the boonies."

"What?"

"I wanted to know what it was like out in the jungle at night." Sam scraped the dew off the bumper with her boot.

"This ain't a jungle. It's a swamp, and it's dangerous. I thought you aimed to stay at the Hugheses' last night."

"I didn't want to. Where were you?"

"I went over to Jim Holly's. I thought it would be a good time to set off that bomb, with you gone. But I went back to round up Moon Pie at dark and I went in and found your note."

"Did you leave Moon Pie in the house to breathe those fumes?"

"No. I took him to Jim's. He hated riding in Jim's truck."

"When I found that stupid flea bomb, I thought you'd flipped out again."

"I had to get rid of those fleas."

"Those fleas don't even bother Moon Pie, and you know it."

He smoked his cigarette down and ground it out on the gravel. He said, "I found out something yesterday morning after you left."

"What?"

"Buddy Mangrum's in the hospital. His liver's real bad."

Sam kicked at the car. "I hate Agent Orange! I hate the Army! What about his little girl?"

"She's home. That operation went O.K., but I don't know how they're going to pay all the bills. If he dies, maybe his wife will collect some benefits, but I doubt it."

Emmett leaned against the VW hood, its prim beige forehead. He said, "Jim and me went up to the hospital for a while, but we didn't see Buddy. We hung around in the waiting room a long time arguing about Geraldine Ferraro." Emmett smiled. "I guess Jim's afraid his wife might decide to run for President or something." Emmett seemed old and worn out. He said, "I know why you were out here. You think you can go through what we went through out in the jungle, but you can't. This place is scary, and things can happen to you, but it's not the same as having snipers and mortar fire and shells and people shooting at you from behind bushes. What have you got to be afraid of? You're afraid somebody'll look at you the wrong way. You're afraid your mama's going to make you go to school in Lexington. Big deal."

"I slept out here in the swamp and I wasn't afraid of anything," she said. "Some people are afraid of snakes, but not me. Some people are even afraid of fleas. I wasn't afraid of snakes or hoot owls or anything."

"Congratulations."

"And when you came, I thought it might be a hunter, or a rapist. But I wasn't scared. I was ready for you." She had left the can of smoked oysters behind, but her hands still smelled.

Emmett lit another cigarette and the sun came up some more. The fog was burning off. Emmett's pimples were crusted with yellow salve. Bile was yellow. Maybe his bile was oozing up from his liver. His liver would go next.

"I wanted to see that bird," she said. "That bird you're looking for." He shrugged, and she went on. "I saw a cardinal. And some raccoons. And a blue jay teasing a squirrel."

"Good for you."

She breathed deeply and kicked at the fender. She was bored with Cawood's Pond. How could that outlaw have stayed out here in hiding? What did he eat? What did he do for recreation? She said, "How did you know I was here?"

"I called around."

"Nobody knew I was here."

"I thought you might have gone to Lexington, but I called Irene this morning and she hadn't seen you."

"You didn't tell her I was missing, did you?"

"No. I just talked about something else. I knew she'd mention it if you were there. I finally figured out you were here from your note. For one thing, I figured you'd go someplace to escape. And also someplace dramatic, because that's like you. Also, you took my poncho and space blanket. When I read that diary, I tried to imagine what I would have done, and this is what I would have done. Once, when I was little and Daddy gave me a whipping because I didn't feed the calves on time, I ran away from home. I ran to the creek and stayed there till it got dark, and while I was there I thought I was getting revenge, for some reason. It's childish, to go run off to the wilderness to get revenge. It's the most typical thing in the world."

"That explains it, then," Sam said disgustedly. "That's what you were doing in Vietnam. That explains what the whole country was doing over there. The least little threat and America's got to put on its cowboy boots and stomp around and show somebody a thing or two."

Emmett walked down the path to the boardwalk, and Sam followed him. She watched her feet, carefully avoiding a broken plank. He flung his cigarette into the water.

She asked, "What did you think of the diary?"

"I didn't sleep none after I read it."

"He couldn't even spell 'machete.' "

"Are you disappointed?"

She fidgeted. "The way he talked about gooks and killing—I hated it." She paused. "I hate him. He was awful, the way he talked about gooks and killing."

Emmett shook her by the shoulders, jostling her until her teeth rattled. "Look here, little girl. He could have been me. All of us, it was the same."

"He loved it, like Pete. He went over there to get some notches on his machete."

"Yeah, and if he hadn't got killed, then he'd have had to live with that."

"It wouldn't have bothered him. He's like Pete."

"It's the same for all of us! Tom and Pete and Jim and Buddy and all of us. You can't do what we did and then be happy about it. And nobody lets you forget it. Goddam it, Sam!" He slammed the railing of the boardwalk so hard it almost broke. He would have fallen into the murky swamp. Emmett was shuddering again, close to sobbing.

"Oh, Emmett!" cried Sam. She was standing with her arms branched out, like the cypress above, but she was frozen on the spot, unable to reach him. She waited. She thought he was going to come out with some suppressed memories of events as dramatic as the one that caused Hawkeye to crack up on the final episode of "M*A*S*H." But nothing came.

"Are you going to talk, Emmett? Can you tell about it? Do the way Hawkeye did when he told about that baby on the bus. His memories lied to him. But he got better when he could reach down and get the right memories." Sam was practically yelling at him. She was frantic.

Emmett said, "There ain't no way to tell it. No point. You can't tell it

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all. Dwayne didn't begin to tell it all."

"Just tell one thing."

"O.K. One thing."

"One thing at a time will be all right."

Emmett lit a cigarette and started slowly, but then he talked faster and faster, as though he were going to pour out everything after all. He said, "There was this patrol I was on and we didn't have enough guys? And we were too close together and this land mine blew us sky-high. We was too close. We had already lost a bunch and we freaked out and huddled together, which you should never do, so we was scrambling to an LZ to meet the chopper. And first we hit this mine and then this grenade come out of nowhere, and I played like I was dead, and I was underneath this big guy about to smother me. The NVA poked around and decided we were all dead and they left, and I laid there about nine hours, and I heard that chopper come and go, but it was too far away and it didn't spot me. I was too scared to signal, because the enemy was there. I could hear 'em. They shot at the chopper. What do you think of that? For hours, then, until the next day, I was all by myself, except for dead bodies. The smell of warm blood in the jungle heat, like soup coming to a boil. Oh, that was awful! They got the radio guy and the radio was smashed. I couldn't use it. I was petrified, and I thought I could hear them for a long time."

"That sounds familiar. I saw something like that in a movie on TV." Sam was shaking, scared.

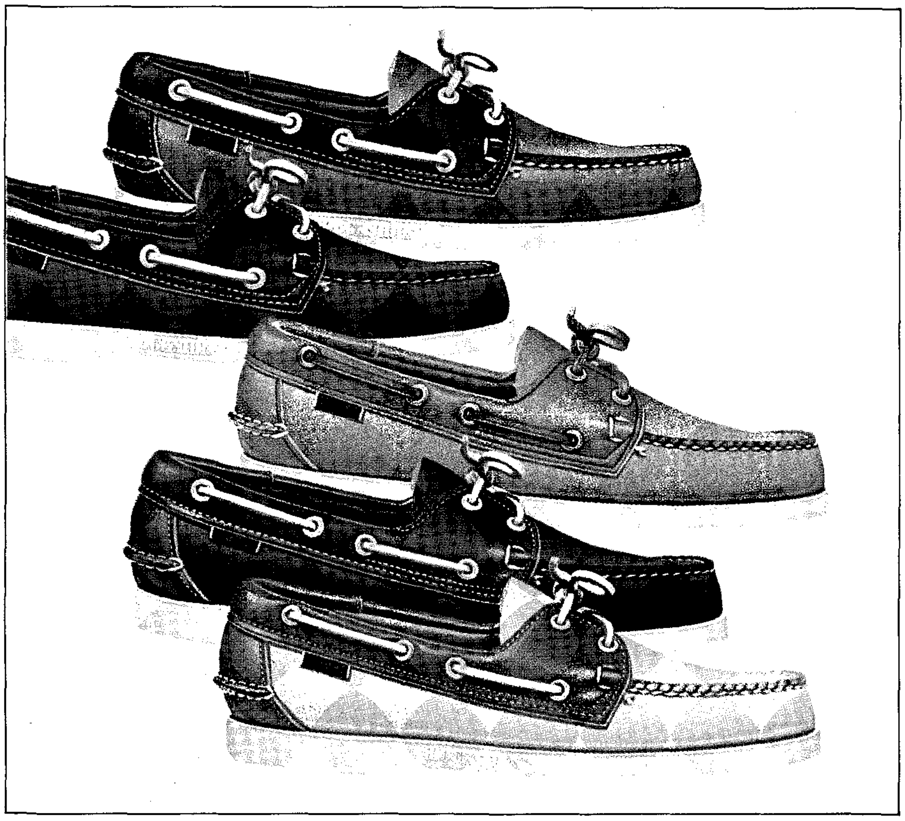
"I know the one you're thinking about—that movie where the camp got overrun and the guy had to hide in that tunnel. This was completely different. It really happened," he said, dragging on his cigarette. "That smell—the smell of death—was everywhere all the time. Even when you were eating, it was like you were eating death."

"I heard somebody in that documentary we saw say that," Sam said.

"Well, it was true! I wasn't the only one who noticed it. Dwayne smelled it."

"He probably liked it."

"Oh, shit-fire, Sam! We were out there trying to survive. It felt good when you got even. You came out here like a little kid running away from home, for spite. Now didn't it feel good? That's why you weren't afraid. 'Cause it felt good to worry me half to death."



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Sam said, "If you ran away when you were little, and you think it's childish to run out here, don't you think you do the same thing? Don't you think it's childish to do what you do, the way you hide and won't get a job, and won't have a girlfriend? Anita's a real pretty woman and it just kills me that you won't go with her."

Emmett's head fell forward with sobs. He cried. Sam hadn't seen him cry like that. The sobs grew louder. He tried to talk and he couldn't. He couldn't even smoke his cigarette.

"Don't talk," she said.

He kept crying, his head down—long throaty sobs, heaving helplessly. Sam let him cry. She heard him say "Anita." She was afraid. Now, at last. She went into the woods to pee and when she got back he was still crying. He sounded exactly like a screech owl. She touched his shoulder, and he shoved her hand away and kept crying—louder now, as though now that they were out in the woods, and it was broad daylight, and there were no people, he could just let loose.

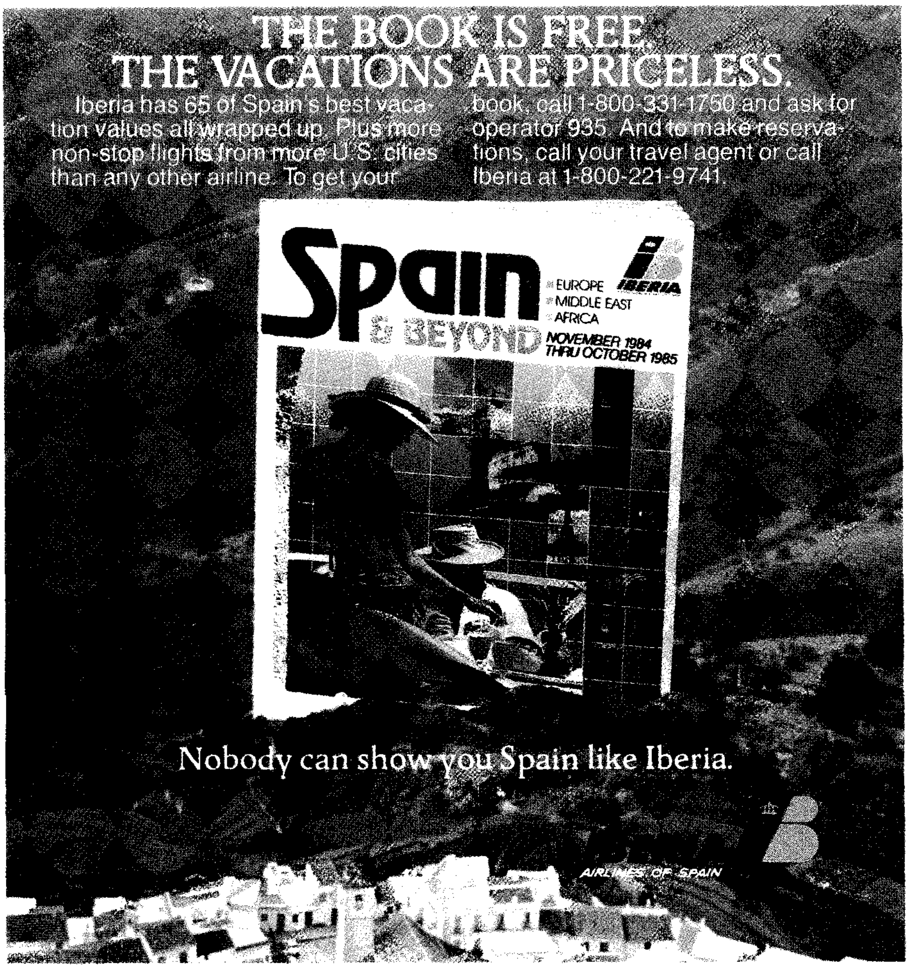
His cry grew louder—as loud as the wail of a peacock. She watched in awe. In his diary, her father seemed to whimper, but Emmett's sorrow was full-blown, as though it had grown over the years into something monstrous and fantastic. His cigarette had burned down, and he dropped it over the railing.

They walked back to the car. Sam sat in the car and Emmett, still crying, sat on the hood. His bulk made the car shake with his sobs. Sam reached in her backpack and wormed out a granola bar. She resisted the temptation to turn on the car radio. An old song, "Stranded in the Jungle," went through her mind. A flash from the past. A golden oldie. It would be ironic if the car wouldn't start. But Cawood's Pond was beginning to seem like home. She and Emmett could stay out here. Emmett's ability to repair things would come in handy. He could rig them up a lean-to. He could dig them a foxhole. It still made her angry that she couldn't dig a foxhole. That woman Mondale nominated could probably dig one.

She had left the car door open. Emmett hung on the door and bent down to speak to her through the window. He said, "You ran off. When you ran off I thought you were dead."

"No, I wasn't dead. What made you think that?"

"I thought you'd left me. I thought



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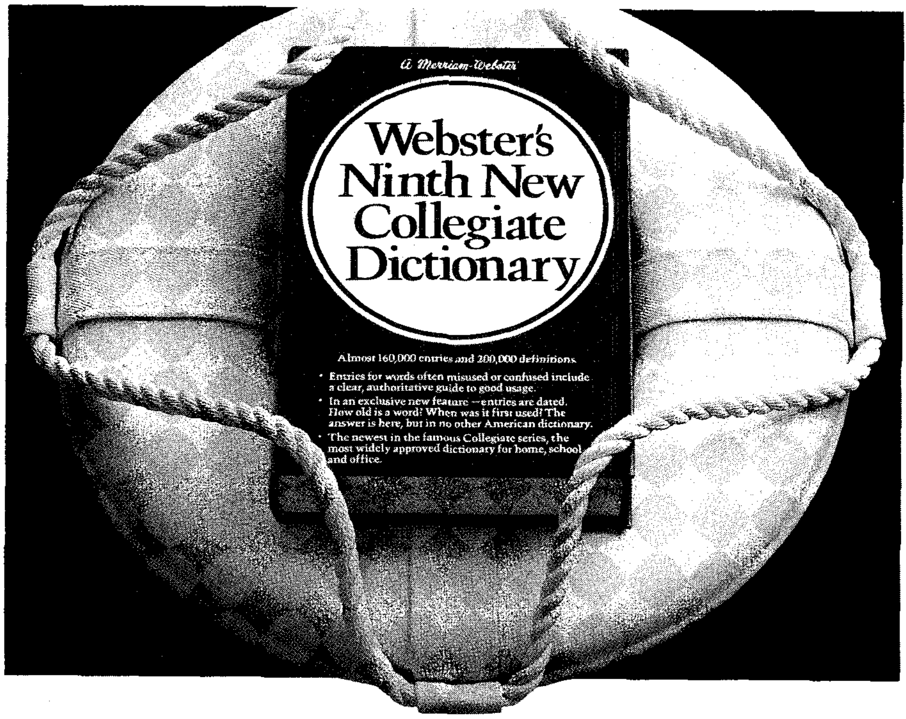
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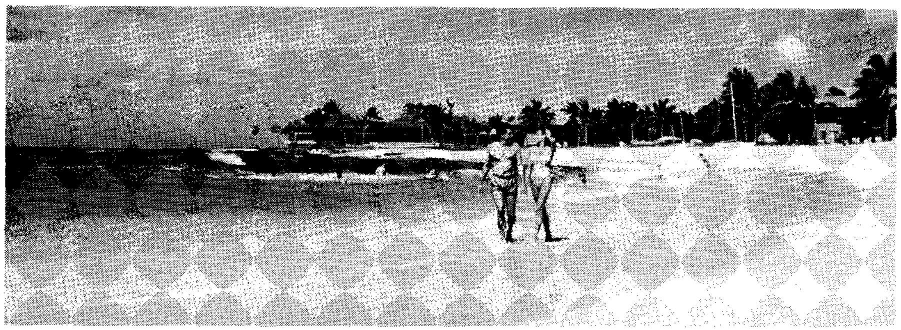

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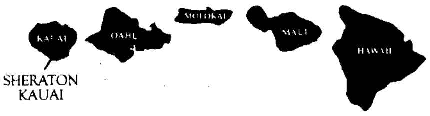
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you must have gone off to die. I was afraid you'd kill yourself."

"Why would you think that?"

"So many kids these days are doing it. On the news the other day, those kids over in Carlisle County that made that suicide pact—that shook me up."

"I wouldn't do that," Sam said.

"But how was I to know? You were gone, and I didn't know what might have happened to you. I thought you'd get hurt. It was like being left by myself and all my buddies dead. I had to find you."

"Thank you." She wadded up the granola wrapper and squeezed it in her hand. She said, "You've done something like that before, Emmett. When you went to Vietnam, you went for Mom's sake—and mine."

He nodded thoughtfully. He said, "It wasn't what you wanted, was it? It wasn't what Irene wanted. Then she got stuck with me because of what I did for her. Ain't life stupid?" He slammed the car door shut.

"Get in, Emmett," she said, reaching to open the door on the passenger side.

"No, I ain't finished." His face was twisted in pain and his pimples glistened with tears. He said, "There's something wrong with me. I'm damaged. It's like something in the center of my heart is gone and I can't get it back. You know when you cut down a tree sometimes and it's diseased in the middle?"

"I never cut down a tree."

"Well, imagine it."

"Yeah. But what you're saying is you don't care about anybody. But you cared enough about me to come out here. And you cared about Mom enough to go over there."

"But don't you understand—let me explain. This is what I *do*. I work on staying together, one day at a time. There's no room for anything else. It takes all my energy."

"Emmett, don't you want to get married and have a family like other people? Don't you want to do something with your life?"

He sobbed again. "I *want* to be a father. But I can't. The closest I can come is with you. And I failed. I should never have let you go so wild. I should have taken care of you."

"You cared," she said. "You felt something for me coming out here." She felt weak. Now her knees felt wobbly. She got out of the car and shut the door.

"I was afraid," he said. "Come here, I want to show you something."

He led her to the boardwalk, and they looked out over the swamp. He pointed to a snake sunning on a log. "That sucker's a cottonmouth."

"I wish that bird would come," Sam said.

"You know the reason I want to see that bird?"

"Not really."

"If you can think about something like birds, you can get outside of yourself, and it doesn't hurt as much. That's the whole idea. That's the whole challenge for the human race. Think about that. Put your thinking cap on, Sam. Put that in your pipe and smoke it! But I can barely get to the point where I can be a self to get out of."

Sam picked a big hunk of fungus off a stump and sniffed it. It smelled dead. Emmett said, "I came out here to save you, but maybe I can't. Maybe you have to find out for yourself. Fuck. You can't learn from the past. The main thing you learn from history is that you can't learn from history. That's what history *is*."

Emmett flung a hand toward the black water beside the boardwalk. "See these little minnows? It looks like they've got one eye on the top of their heads. They're called topwaters. They're good for a pond. Catfish whomp 'em up. See that dead tree? That's a woodpecker hole up there. But a wood duck will build a nest there."

"How do you know all that?"

"I've watched 'em. There are things you can figure out, but most things you can't." He waved at the dark swamp. "There are some things you can never figure out."

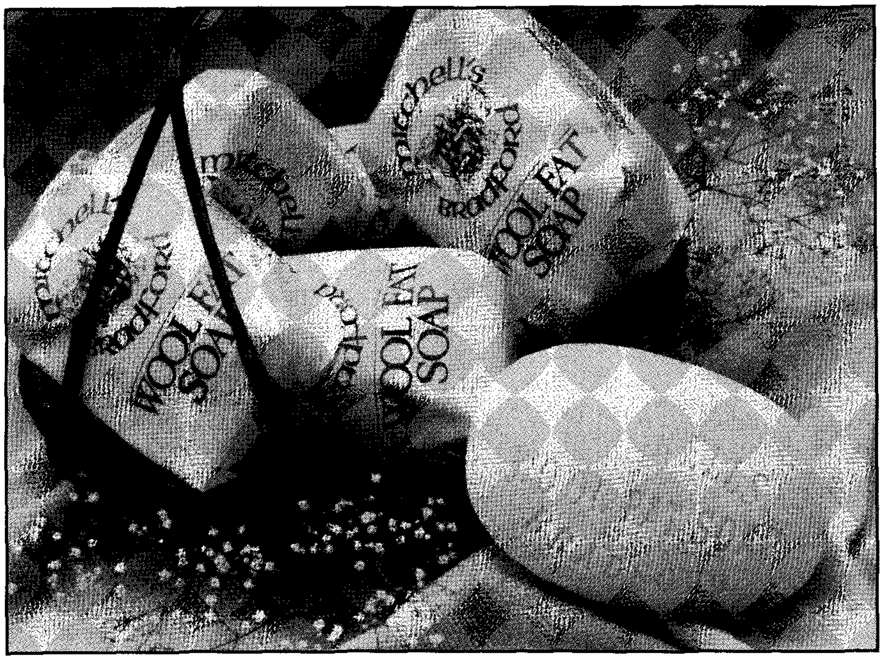
He turned and walked ahead of her, walking fast up the path from the boardwalk. She followed. He entered a path into the woods and walked faster. Poison ivy curled around his shoes. From the back, he looked like an old peasant woman hugging a baby. Sam watched as he disappeared into the woods. He seemed to float away, above the poison ivy, like a pond skimmer, beautiful in his flight.

—BOBBIE ANN MASON

●

"I've decided there are two kinds of directors: film makers and theatrical directors. . . . You know within five minutes of meeting a director which type he is. If he wants an actor to invent, then he's a film maker. If he sees a character like a character in literature, then he's a film maker. Robert Benton's like that."—*Los Angeles Times*.

What choice did he have?



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ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

CABLE—III

AT the beginning of the nineteen-eighties, publicity about the expansion of the cable-television business was making a considerable impression on many people who were concerned about the programming standards of commercial television. To a number of them, it seemed that cable television was opening up encouraging opportunities for bypassing the mass-audience, lowest-common-denominator approach of commercial television and for conveying to home screens, on a pay-subscription basis, entertainment programs of relatively high quality and a variety of innovative information services.

Such expectations were not entirely new. A decade and a half earlier, a great deal of excitement had been stirred up by a pioneering pay-TV cable system called Subscription Television, which had been launched on the West Coast in 1964, under the direction of Matthew Fox, a movie executive, and Sylvester L. (Pat) Weaver, Jr., a former president and chairman of the board of the National Broadcasting Company and the co-creator, in the nineteen-fifties, of such popular NBC programs as "Today," "Tonight," and "Your Show of Shows," starring Sid Caesar. In addition to paying a basic subscription fee of a dollar a week for regular programs put on by STV, subscribers were billed, through electronic gadgetry that was part of a system known as Skiatron, for special programs such as baseball games of the Los Angeles Dodgers and the San Francisco Giants. But in those days the whole idea of pay TV was anathema to movie-theatre owners, who were afraid that the service would drastically cut into their revenues. In reaction to Weaver's pay-cable operation, California theatre owners put on a well-financed and very aggressive campaign against STV, and arranged to place on the California ballot, in November of 1964, a referendum on pay cable. The referendum passed, and it had the effect of outlawing pay cable in the state; that is, until the California Superior Court ruled that the referendum was unconstitutional. But in the meantime the campaign of the theatre owners had caused STV to go out of business. STV's failure had a discouraging effect on the development of pay TV generally, and the commercial television broadcasters, by lobbying the Federal Communications Commission, managed to keep it suppressed for the next decade—until Home Box Office, a Time, Inc., company, began transmitting pay-TV programming to cable companies all over the country via communications satellite, thereby transforming the efficiency and operating scale of the entire cable business. "Pat Weaver was ahead of his time—he just got there too soon," J. Richard Munro, the president and chief executive officer of Time, Inc., told me a while ago in discussing the overnight success of HBO. "The world was not ready for Pat Weaver. It *was* ready for us. Timing is usually the crucial factor with these things, and it's either blind luck or dumb fate."

Soon after the HBO satellite-relay service got under way, cable companies throughout the country rushed to equip themselves with dish antennas that could receive HBO programs. Then other pay-TV outfits began a scramble to get into the satellite-service pay-cable business. Within a short time, the whole cable industry, after so many years of difficulties, began to boom. According to the predictions of various cable enthusiasts, commercial television broadcasting would now have to yield ground to cable "narrowcasting," in which an extraordinary diversity of cultural services, entertainment, and information would be made available to subscribers—such bounty showering down via satellite relay from what one television trade publication called a "cornucopia in the sky." While this excited talk was going on, large corporate owners of multiple cable systems were putting on elaborate selling and public-relations campaigns in cities throughout the country to capture exclusive cable franchises, and city officials were being overwhelmed with promises about interactive cable services. Through such two-way systems, subscribers would have direct access to all sorts of information—news, stock-market reports—and they would be able to order, from computer-terminal equipment attached to their TV sets, all sorts of goods through onscreen mail-order catalogues.

The optimism prevailing at that time among cable people was perhaps typified by the buoyant outlook of Michael H. Dann, a well-known consultant in the business with extensive experience in both commercial and public television, whom I interviewed in the fall of 1981. When I first encountered him, in the mid-nineteen-fifties, he was the network program director and then the principal executive assistant to Sylvester Weaver at NBC. After Weaver left NBC, in 1956, Dann became the network's vice-president of program sales, and then moved to CBS as vice-president for programs in New York. At CBS, he had an unusually long tenure, and became program chief of the network in 1965. In 1970, he moved to public television as a senior adviser to the Children's Television Workshop (out of which came, among other programs, "Sesame Street")—a move he explained by saying, "I was convinced that commercial television would never change, because it was a mass-entertainment form basically designed to cater to the movement of goods and services at the lowest cost per thousand." In the early nineteen-seventies, Dann was gripped by cable fever. He became chairman of an advisory committee on programming for QUBE, the Warner Amex interactive-cable experiment in Columbus, Ohio, and was a major force in creating the Warner Amex Satellite Entertainment Company's cable channel Nickelodeon, a children's-programming service that has been highly praised. When Dann talked to me about his expectations for cable, he was, as he still is, senior adviser to ABC's Video Enterprise Division, which develops ABC projects for the cable and videocassette industries.

On the promise of cable television as

a key element in what he referred to as “the electronic revolution” and “the communications revolution,” Dann could hardly contain his enthusiasm—especially over the range of services to be offered on cable. “The electronic revolution is like our Western frontier,” he told me in one of our talks. “The horizons are unlimited. I’ve predicted that soon people will be spending as much per month on the electronic software in their homes as on their cars—or more. They’ll be spending perhaps two hundred dollars a month on these services, through which they will be receiving movies, medical services, fire- and security-alarm services, stereo-program services, business services, academic courses that they will pay for. And they’ll build up libraries at home to store this information—on videocassettes or videodiscs. There will be a whole *room* in the modern house to store all this. And there is a commitment to this future even before the actual availability of the software. Never have the American people and American industry exhibited such faith in a world that might be.

“Just to indicate the pace of the revolution, within the last few months approximately thirty transponder channels for two separate communications satellites that will feed cable services have been ordered. Everybody’s ordering satellites for transmission of service to cable systems—Westinghouse, Time, Inc., Ted Turner, Warner Amex. Time, Inc., has ordered six more satellite transponders. Ted Turner has ordered two transponders. Warner Amex has ordered four more transponders. The demand for channel space is enormous. A year, two years ago, some relatively small companies could get channel reservations on a satellite that hadn’t yet been built just by putting order letters in—just letters of intent, no option money down—and in a short time these same people, who didn’t even have any specific need for these channels, were able to resell or lease parts of these channels for six or seven million dollars a year. The explosion of channel capacity on satellites for the supply of cable services has taken place so quickly that within the next three or four years there’s a good chance that fifty or sixty services are going to be offered to the cable subscriber. If you look at the future of cable, you see what an easy transmission-and-delivery system it provides into the home, and how cable facilities have the capacity for providing two-way services to people—you’re no longer simply at the receiving end of a one-way service, like broadcasting.”

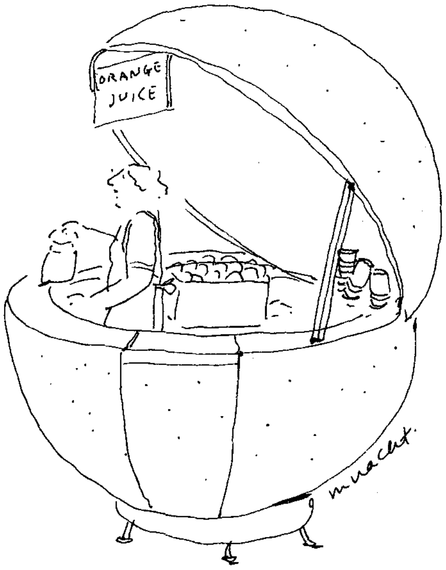
“Thanks for waiting for me, Jocko, but I still can’t play. I’ve decided to go for a Ph.D.”

Dann went on to talk of the infinite variety of specialized services that, he predicted, cable would provide, and of their likely effects—electronic banking transactions would be carried out from home by nearly everybody, and electric and other utilities would be electronically monitored for record-keeping and bill-paying purposes, and made more cost-efficient through cable-carried signals. Cable services in and out of the home would include the connection of burglar- and fire-alarm systems that, via coaxially carried signals, would alert police and fire departments in emergencies. And all this, Dann assured me, represented just the beginning of the possible benefits to the public. “Think of the phrase ‘doctor’s house call,’ which seems to have all but passed out of use,” he said. “Many—perhaps most—young people today have never had a doctor visit them in their homes.” Cable could change all that, he indicated. “If you have a heart attack at the Boston airport, say, you might get the best possible treatment by being taken to a first-aid room, where a paraprofessional has the video camera down on you, and he rings the cardiac-arrest people at Massachusetts General, and they look at the color and cardiogram, and they take your medical history (if you’re awake), and treatment may be administered immediately—they don’t have to wait half an hour to get out to the airport by ambulance. The principle of the house call could be revived by a signal going, in effect, to the doctor’s office, and saving people that wait of an hour, two hours in the waiting room.”

After a pause, Dann continued, “People now think of cable as television, as an extension of television, rather than as a utility in the home. That is going to change. The time is coming when the term ‘television set’ will no longer be used—we’ll call it a monitor, and there will be differentsized monitors all around the house. But the monitors will be used for different things. There may be one the size of your living-room wall for viewing sporting events. But for a woman who is maybe taking a course in chopping liver it will be on a three-by-three-inch screen, very tiny, next to her Cuisinart. Ninety-five per cent of what comes on the monitors, whether from cable or videodisc or videocassettes, will represent the passage of information and services rather than entertainment. Entertainment services will always be big on the commercial networks, and of course these same programs can also be viewed on cable—situation comedy, melodrama, and occasionally the live events that are so popular. That's mass entertainment, that's basic fare, and that's why the commercial networks are still going to do one hell of a business ten years from now. But nearly all the *information* services that cable will specialize in providing will have nothing to do with watching television as we have known it. You'll be using your monitor for something else—for taking academic courses or for using any or all of the other information services available. And whether this takes the form of something with ethnic appeal or of cooking channels it's something that you would not be getting on commercial television. And your children will be able to watch on cable the kind of quality children's programming that just isn't available on commercial television. If you're interested in bridge—and there are some twelve million bridge players in the United States—just imagine, when they start putting on, every single night, a major bridge tournament, the number of people who will want to see bridge tournaments on cable. Or chess, for two or three hours at a time. This isn't going to be on the same order as watching 'Sanford and Son.' "

Other services, Dann said, might include "a national Polish channel or a geriatric channel or two different kinds of health channels, one an exercise channel and the other a preventive-medicine channel, dealing with vitamins and nutrition and all the components that are involved in healthful living, not just exercise—and certain exercise channels will just do exercises all day long, and the exercises won't be for the same kind of people." As for the merchandising of goods, cable, in contrast to commercial television, which "pre-sells" mass audiences on consumer goods through campaigns featuring relatively brief ads, would be used to transmit sales messages to specialized and carefully targeted audiences through techniques uniquely suited to the new medium.

"Cable commercials will be different," Dann said. "A cable commercial may be on all day long. If they are having the Pillsbury Bake-Off at the Waldorf-Astoria, when does the commercial stop? With cable, they can cover the event from start to finish. If Simplicity Pattern gives a sewing course, and the housewife has access to the Simplicity sewing-course room via cable, the Simplicity people don't even have to say the name 'Simplicity' one time on the air—the viewers will see the Simplicity logo in the background throughout the course. Then, there is the cosmetics industry. The cosmetics industry, advertising on cable, isn't going to show you just the jar—you'll see the counter, the jar, the demonstration in depth. It may start out with a discussion: 'Did you ever have a problem with your skin?' And the woman in front of the counter says, 'Yes, I've had this and that,' and it'll go on for half an hour, but it will not be hard sell; it will be an entirely different approach. There are no rules in the cable industry requiring you to have only so many minutes for commercials, with every minute so precious, as it is in broadcasting; the cable companies can be so much looser about the length of commercials, because they have so much channel capacity. Everybody can be on cable longer—the performer can be on longer, the writer can write longer, the cook can cook longer, the talker can talk longer. And cable is so cheap in comparison to broadcasting that in most communities if you want to get on a public-access channel and *hum* you can go on.



"You already see the trend in the print media toward specialized publications. The big strength of these newcomers is that they know their subject and they know how to use the right delivery system." Dann went on to speak of satellite-transmission systems used by newspapers. "The *Wall Street Journal* is a specialized publication, and now it is published around the country, using a satellite-transmission delivery system," he said. "The *Times* will probably have not only a New York edition and a single national edition but also special editions for different parts of the United States. And the *Times*, as you know, now includes a special section every day covering a different subject—pick up the *Times* and olive oil is the leading story in the Living section. And the scope of the electronic revolution is such that all sorts of corporations that were never part of the television industry are getting into cable, because of the diversity of activities they see ahead. And because it's a good area for venture capital. Think of Getty Oil, which went into cable with ESPN"—the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network—"or American Express going in, as it has, with Warner Communications; that's a pretty wide departure from their traditional business. These companies are going to use their financing and know-how to go into cable because it's a good place for them to put venture capital. And when American Express came in with Warner to form Warner Amex as a joint venture it came, in part, because its people understand *marketing*. Warner didn't know how to study and apply the demographics of the market the way American Express knows how. When Warner Brothers put a movie into the theatres, it was rolling dice; the *public* decided right at the box office how successful it was. Well, that's quite different from the modern marketing of consumer goods. Procter & Gamble doesn't do things that way. It doesn't roll dice. It test-markets. It picks cities, marketing areas, it test-markets variations of the product, test-markets this, test-markets that—it's done by *computer*. These corporations understand the future of communications. And, beyond that, they understand how all-encompassing the whole communications revolution is bound to be. Remember, we're talking about a change in the way people live. It's like what happened when the jets landed in Tahiti, and how it changed the island. It's public lighting by electricity for the first time in London, putting an end to the age of gaslight. This revolution is going to encompass everything you do."

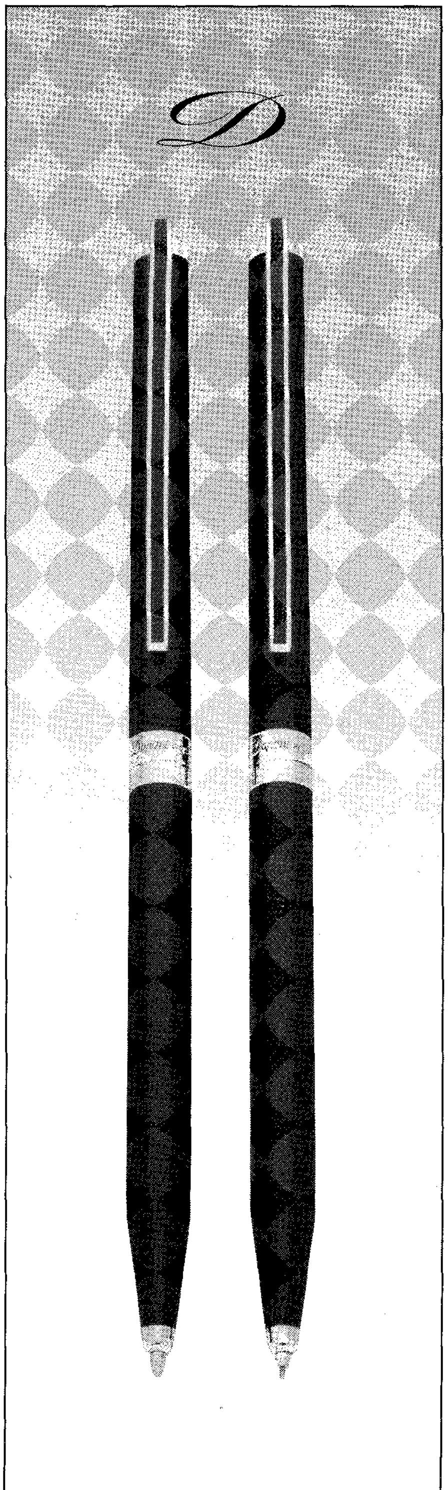
BY the end of 1984, the number of satellite-distributed program services designed for transmission over cable-television systems throughout the United States had grown to nearly fifty, and a dozen stereophonic and other audio services were in operation. In addition to the big movie and entertainment pay-cable networks, led by the dominant Home Box Office, cable programming included a variety of specialized services that were in most cases—though not all—advertiser-supported, and available to cable viewers at no charge beyond the basic subscription fee.

In the area of news, one notable development in these satellite-distributed cable services was Ted Turner's Cable News Network, which has been in operation for five years and has come to represent almost a fourth network in the coverage of national and international news. Turner, a flamboyant entrepreneur who was formerly the owner of a commercial-billboard company in Atlanta, is a much-publicized figure in the communications and sports worlds. Lately, as everyone knows, he has become the center of a huge uproar because of his attempt at a hostile takeover of the entire CBS communications complex. In 1970, Turner bought a small, money-losing independent ultra-high-frequency station, WJRJ, in Atlanta. WJRJ had a weak signal and carried weak programming; Turner changed the call letters to WTCG and tried to make the station profitable by showing old movies, reruns of family situation comedies, like "Leave It to Beaver," and sports events. In December of 1976, after Time, Inc., put its HBO service on the Satcom I satellite, Turner arranged to have the programs of WTCG carried on a transponder of Satcom I for relay to cable systems in several states. Turner was subsequently able to transform his minor, local UHF station into what he called a "Superstation," which could reach a potential audience of tens of millions. The station, whose call letters were changed to WTBS (for Turner Broadcasting System) in 1979, rapidly became an extremely profitable advertising vehicle for touting nationally distributed consumer goods. The Superstation's programming emphasized movies and sports and general entertainment. By now, WTBS reaches thirty-four million cable subscribers throughout the country.

Turner's next step, in June of 1980, was to start CNN, a twenty-four-hour news service, also originating in Atlanta and distributed to cable systems throughout the country via its own channel on Satcom I (later on Satcom III-R). During its first year and a half of operation, CNN incurred such large financial losses that its imminent collapse was widely predicted by people in the television business, even though Turner kept pumping money into it from the profits of his Superstation, which were now on the order of twenty-five million dollars a year.

CNN is now being relayed by more than fifty-eight hundred cable systems, serving more than thirty-two million households—about eighty-five per cent of all the households in the country that have cable service. To provide partial compensation for the service, which is advertiser-supported, the Turner organization charges cable systems between fifteen and twenty-two cents a month per subscriber to relay it, and those charges are absorbed by the monthly fees that subscribers pay to the cable systems to receive their basic cable service. The CNN programming, which features several former network news correspondents, has become considerably more professional than what one might expect from a national news organization that was started only five years ago, and, whatever its insufficiencies, it seems to be relatively free of the portentous air and slick packaging that characterize the big commercial networks' news shows. CNN specializes in on-the-spot coverage of fast-breaking news—it carried, day and night, constantly updated coverage of the terrorist bombing of the United States Marine headquarters building in Beirut in October of 1983—and, among other things, it appears to have demonstrated that a minor yet still sizable portion of the television audience is available and willing to watch parts of extended news programming throughout the night.

This revelation caused executives of the three big commercial networks to become concerned about the competition being offered to them—and their advertising—by CNN. In the fall of 1981, in reaction to the upstart cable news service, Westinghouse Broad-



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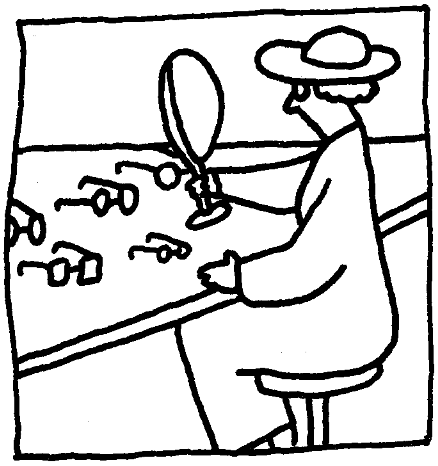
casting's Group W Satellite Communications, which already had an audience base of nearly two million cable subscribers, and ABC Video Enterprises announced plans to start an advertiser-supported headline service called Satellite News Channels, which, it was promised, would be distributed to cable systems (and, of course, to Group W cable subscribers) throughout the country without the monthly charge being levied by CNN. (In fact, Satellite News Channels paid cable operators to carry its service.) To counter these plans, Turner announced that he was going to start a twenty-four-hour advertiser-supported cable news-headline service of his own, to be called CNN2, that would be available both to commercial television stations and to cable systems without charge. By the beginning of January, 1982, he had the new service in operation (its name was soon changed to CNN Headline News), beating the ABC–Group W headline service by several months. A few weeks later, in a letter to executives of cable systems, Turner charged that while ABC "outwardly is embracing cable," with its proposed news service, "in the other hand is a dagger to put us away," and as evidence he produced a transcript quoting John Behnke, the chairman of a committee representing a group of ABC affiliates and the ABC network itself, as urging executives of affiliated stations to join in the work of a Viewer Information and Education Committee, which would emphasize the dangers posed to a free-TV system by cable television. Turner also quoted Behnke as having made this suggestion to ABC-affiliate executives to help the committee's work: "Plan with your programming and news people to produce and air news 'mini-docs' on the subject of pay-TV vs. free-TV, or the implications of unregulated cable TV growth."

In an interview at the time with reporters for the trade press, Turner charged that ABC was out to "torpedo" the cable industry as a whole, and he left no doubt about his intense dislike of the networks as a collective institution. "It's in the best interests of cable to see the networks destroyed, and that's what I'm working on," he declared. Then, in March of 1982, at a meeting in Atlanta with executives of stations affiliated with ABC, CBS, and NBC, Turner boasted that three-fourths of the commercial broadcasters who were buying CNN Headline News were actually affiliates of the three big television networks. When network executives realized the extent of the commitments being made by their affiliates to the Turner service, they reacted by adding their own programs for night-owl viewers—CBS with "Nightwatch" and "The CBS Early Morning News" between 2 A.M. and 7 A.M., and NBC with "NBC News Overnight."

By October of 1983, the CNN Headline News service, which consists of forty-eight newscasts a day in thirty-minute blocks containing four-to-eight-minute segments on national and international news, sports results, weather, and human-interest odds and ends, was going out to six hundred and seventy-five cable systems, with more than five and a half million subscribers, and also to a hundred and forty-three commercial television stations, and even, via a separate audio feed, to ninety radio stations.

Turner still had it in for the ABC–Group W people, as well as for the networks in general. In March of 1983, nine months after the start of the Satellite News Channels news-headline service, he brought an anti-trust suit against SNC and Group W, charging that SNC had been in collusion with Group W to keep CNN Headline News from being accepted by major cable systems owned by Group W—for example, the cable system in upper Manhattan owned and operated by Group W. Whatever the facts, the SNC operation was doing poorly in the competition with the Headline News service, and by the fall of 1983 it had lost an estimated sixty million dollars, and possibly seventy-five million. In October of 1983, Turner moved in for the kill and bought out the SNC service for twenty-five million dollars—twelve and a half million to Westinghouse Broadcasting, and twelve and a half million to ABC Video Enterprises. Turner bragged that he had "won the all-news war," and as part of the settlement he had Group W agree to make available either the CNN or the CNN Headline News to Group W's own hundred and ten systems (with a total of one million three hundred thousand subscribers), which had been under contract to carry the SNC service. (Also as part of the settlement, Turner withdrew his anti-trust suit.) Although the cost of Turner's victory was considerable—it probably raised his investment in the whole CNN operation by about twenty-five per cent—he was able thereby immediately to add some two million seven hundred and seventy thousand subscribers to the available audience for his two news services.



Besides these cable news services, several other satellite-fed specialized cable services have come into operation during the past decade. One is the SIN Television Network, which on a twenty-four-hour basis relays Spanish-language movies, sports events, and soap operas and other serial dramas through three hundred and twenty-six cable systems, to which twenty-nine and a half million households are wired. The SIN service also operates Galavisión, a relatively small Spanish-language pay-TV service that conveys movies, variety shows, and some sports events to two hundred and thirty cable systems. A few other foreign-language cable networks also came into existence with the increased availability of satellite-transmission channels. Black Entertainment Television (BET) was started in 1980; it is the only television network directed at black audiences, and it serves four hundred and forty cable systems, reaching nine million households. It now transmits a round-the-clock service. BET's programming consists primarily of music videos featuring black performers, but it also includes theatrical movies, live or taped interviews and variety performances, and live coverage of basketball and football games between black colleges—the sort of coverage that commercial television generally ignores. Several sports cable networks have also been established. They include SportsChannel, which consists of four regional networks, with a million subscribers, and, on the local level, the Madison Square Garden Network, which carries coverage of all home games and selected road games of the New York Rangers hockey club and the New York Knickerbockers basketball club via fifty-seven cable systems in the greater New York metropolitan area to nearly two million households. The biggest sports cable network is the Entertainment and Sports Programming Network. An ad-supported satellite service, ESPN was started in 1979 as a result of the efforts of a hockey press agent named William S. Rasmussen, who had been looking for a Connecticut service that would transmit New England (now Hartford) Whalers hockey games and University of Connecticut sports events to cable systems in the state. Finding that he would have to pay no more in satellite-transmission costs to carry sports and entertainment programs throughout the country than he would to transmit local hockey coverage to cable systems within the state, Rasmussen persuaded executives of the Getty Oil Company, which was interested in putting some of its oil profits into television, to bankroll the new service. (Despite the word "Entertainment" in the name of the service, virtually the only entertainment carried by ESPN has consisted of sports.) With the exception of a morning business-news program, ESPN provides continuous sports coverage each day, ranging from United States Football League and College Football Association games to billiard tournaments, and the number of its subscribers has grown from one and a half million in 1979 to more than thirty-four and a half million by the beginning of 1985. During the last year and a half, the corporate ownership and control of ESPN has shifted several times. Early in 1984, Getty Oil, which had sold fifteen per cent of ESPN to ABC Video Enterprises, was acquired in the oil-merger sweepstakes by Texaco, which then sold the remaining eighty-five per cent of ESPN to ABC. Later in the year, ABC Video Enterprises sold a twenty-per-cent interest in ESPN to Nabisco Brands, which, in turn, assigned the management of its interest in ESPN to one of Nabisco's affiliated companies.

In 1982, for viewers interested in health and fitness, the Cable Health Network came into being. So did a cable service called Daytime, which was to provide programming aimed at women. But neither of these services prospered, and early last year they were merged to form a service called Lifetime, operated by Hearst/ABC–Viacom Entertainment Services, a joint venture of the Hearst Corporation, ABC, and Viacom International. Lifetime now reaches nearly twenty-five million cable subscribers. It specializes in talk shows on fashion, food, pop psychology, what talk-show people call "parenting," and sex. It goes in heavily for call-ins by viewers, and by far the most popular of these call-in shows is "Good Sex!," featuring Dr. Ruth Westheimer, a sex therapist whose candid language and bubbly manner have made her famous.

With the growth of satellite services, a number of cable services owned by religious organizations also went into operation. The biggest, the CBN Network, was started up in 1977 by the Christian Broadcasting Network, and it now goes out through Satcom III-R to fifty-three hundred cable systems and is available to more than twenty-eight million subscribers. Much of the CBN programming consists of old family series, situation comedies, and old Westerns.

In the area of cable programming for children, Nickelodeon, which started up in 1979, has grown to the point where it is available through nearly four thousand cable systems to twenty-five million households. And there is the Disney Channel, a nineteen-hour-a-day service that carries a great deal of children's programming as part of its family-oriented fare.

In addition, there are highly specialized services, such as the Weather Channel, a twenty-four-hour service that was started in 1982 and is now available through sixteen hundred cable systems to over seventeen million cable households, and the Financial News Network, a twenty-four-hour service that reports on and offers analyses of the financial market to over eighteen million subscribers connected to eleven hundred cable systems.

Perhaps the most outstanding public service undertaken by cable systems has been the transmission of the Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network, or C-SPAN, a twenty-four-hour, nonprofit service devoted to coverage of national and legislative affairs. C-SPAN was started early in 1979—shortly after the House of Representatives authorized live television coverage of its floor sessions—under the leadership of Brian Lamb, a former Washington bureau chief of the cable-industry trade magazine *Cable Vision*, with four hundred thousand dollars put together by a group of cable-industry executives. Now operating with an annual budget of five and a half

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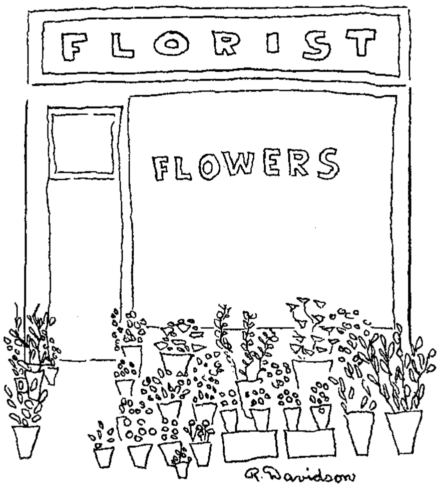
million dollars, C-SPAN presents live, gavel-to-gavel television coverage of the proceedings on the floor of the House, and also carries extensive live or taped coverage of Senate and House committee hearings. In 1984, C-SPAN ran five hundred and ninety hours of live coverage of Senate and House hearings, and in addition to its congressional coverage it transmits extensive live or taped reports on issues like American military policy—for example, coverage of a teleconference set up in the spring of 1984 by the Union of Concerned Scientists, between Boston and eleven other American cities, on American space-based defense policy. In 1984, C-SPAN showed extensive live and taped coverage of the Presidential primary campaigns, the Republican and Democratic National Conventions, and the Presidential election. Even though C-SPAN is financed by the cable industry, through the fee that it charges cable systems, only about one cable system in three of the more than sixty-five hundred in the country carries the service, and some cable-system owners appear to do so only reluctantly. (As it happens, the service is not available in Washington itself, which has so far not been cabled.) Each month, viewers in an estimated eight million households watch C-SPAN. This is a trifling audience by commercial-network standards, perhaps, but the networks don't have this kind of extended public-service coverage anyway.

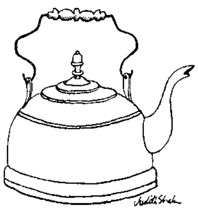
In addition to all these cable services, there are several advertiser-supported music-video channels. One is the Nashville Network, which started in March of 1983 and is operated by Opryland USA and Group W, and which specializes in country music. Another is Music Television, or MTV, which is owned by Warner Amex Satellite Entertainment. MTV is aimed at a young audience, to which it brings rock concerts and videos. The videotaped or filmed shorts, mostly from three to eight minutes long, are made by record companies for promotional purposes, and show rock groups or soloists, including stars such as Michael Jackson, Billy Joel, Prince, Cyndi Lauper, and Madonna, and groups such as Duran Duran and the Rolling Stones, performing their musical numbers in highly dramatized, often semisurreal settings. Visually, many of the videos convey a certain air of back-alley menace, but recently the MTV people have indicated that they are ready to reduce the number of so-called heavy-metal videos. MTV, which goes out through more than three thousand cable systems to nearly twenty-six million cable households, is the most widely hyped service on cable. Its influence on the rock-music business has been such that virtually no major rock group can now afford not to produce videos for showing on the service. According to MTV people, the première showing in 1983 of a fourteen-minute video made by Michael Jackson (at a reported cost of a million dollars) to promote the title song from his record album "Thriller" had such an effect on sales of the album in this country that they went from two hundred thousand a week to an average of eight hundred thousand. (By the latest count, the worldwide sales of "Thriller" have exceeded thirty-seven million.) According to figures produced by MTV executives, the median household income of MTV subscribers is thirty-one thousand dollars a year, and sixty-nine per cent of MTV viewers over the age of eighteen attended college.

The success of MTV attracted and then, it seems, repelled the ubiquitous Ted Turner. Terence McGuirk, a Turner Broadcasting System vice-president, claimed that cable operators had to pay unreasonable fees to MTV to retransmit it. "There's a hot demographic there that Madison Avenue wants, and there's no reason [for cable operators] to pay that much for it," he told *CableVision* last August. The same month, Turner announced that he was considering launching a rival advertiser-supported rock-music-video service. In doing so, Turner indicated to cable operators that his service would avoid videos that were suggestive of violence or sex. And Turner also notified cable operators that his service would be offered to them free for five years if they carried the service from its inception. Specifically, Turner's proposed new service was designed to offer competition both to MTV and to a new music-video service, called VH-1, that the MTV people themselves were preparing to launch. By October 26th, nine weeks before VH-1 began transmitting to cable systems, Turner had rushed his own music service, called the Cable Music Channel, into operation. He promised that the service was beginning with two and a half million cable subscribers. But after two weeks in operation it turned out that it actually had been able to attract only about four hundred subscribers. By the end of November, Turner was obliged to sell his Cable Music Channel to MTV Networks, for a million dollars.



VH-1 (for Video Hits One) started up in January of this year. VH-1 is directed primarily at a twenty-five-and-over audience. Transmitted in digitally encoded stereo sound, it features performances in a mixture of musical styles, including soft rock, soft rhythm-and-blues, and crossover country, as well as contemporary. To date, the VH-1 service is being carried by more than four hundred cable systems with five and a half million subscribers.

EVER since the mid-sixties, when Pat Weaver was directing his Subscription Television project on the West Coast, many cable enthusiasts have conjured up visions of bringing the performing arts into the home on a scale that no other electronic medium has attempted. The peak of such talk was probably reached in the early nineteen-eighties, with the launching of several satellite-distributed services designed to provide movie and performing-arts programs of superior quality. The first of these was Bravo, a pay service that was started in December of 1980 by Rainbow Programming Services, a joint venture of Cablevision Systems Corporation, of Woodbury, New York; Cox Cable Communications, of Atlanta; and Daniels & Associates, of Denver. (Cablevision is a greatly expanded corporate version of a small Long Island cable system that Charles F. Dolan—who once headed Sterling Communications, which was partly owned by Time, Inc., and was involved in the formation of Home Box Office—acquired from Time, Inc., in 1973.) During its four and a half years of operation, Bravo has increased its audience fairly steadily and has also increased the number of hours in which it can be viewed. At first, it was sent out only two nights a week, but now it is available every night, and is being relayed over two hundred and twenty-five cable systems to three hundred and fifty thousand paying subscribers. Much of what it shows consists of the sort of films that run in the so-called art houses—films like "Closely Watched Trains," "Diva," "The Night of the Shooting Stars," and "The Marriage of Maria Braun." It has regular jazz programming and has also shown its own jazz festival, featuring, for example, performances of the Gerry Mulligan Quartet, Dizzy Gillespie, and Dave Brubeck.



Four months after the introduction of Bravo, ABC Video Enterprises and the Hearst Corporation, in a joint venture, started their own satellite-distributed cultural cable service, ARTS (for Alpha Repertory Television Service), which had commercials and was offered every night to subscribers, without an extra monthly charge. Programs carried on the ARTS service included taped or film versions of operas such as "Carmen" and "La Bohème," and plays such as Thornton Wilder's "Our Town," Eugene O'Neill's "Long Day's Journey Into Night," Harold Pinter's "The Collection" (with Laurence Olivier and Alan Bates), Turgenev's "A Month in the Country," and the Joseph Papp production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," taped in performance at Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival in Central Park. In addition, the service carried, among other things, a collection of Alvin Ailey dances, taped in performance before a live audience; a series of interviews with well-known artists, performers, and writers; and discussion programs featuring critics in the arts.

Until ABC decided to establish its ARTS service, the big three television networks had preserved—in public, at least—their common front against the cable industry, and had become accustomed to having their anti-cable activities strongly backed by their local affiliated stations; in fact, the management of many of these stations had demanded that the networks take every necessary measure to stave cable off. Over a period of years, however, the network affiliates had become sufficiently impressed by the profitable potential of cable that some sixty per cent of them owned or had financial interests in cable systems. By the beginning of the nineteen-eighties, the networks had begun to consider how they themselves might somehow become involved in and eventually establish some leadership in cable programming, without unduly disturbing the loyalty of their affiliates or their own continued championship of the principles of commercial TV. Cultural programming on cable seemed a good solution, since such programming was hardly likely to cut seriously into the mass-market audience sought by big national advertisers. Even at ABC, the network that had been the most vociferously anti-cable, a satellite-fed cable cultural service seemed a relatively harmless way of sliding into a position of doing business with the cable industry. "It's taken the networks five years to come around to the view that they should not only stop struggling against the cable industry but also join in it, and the thing that has prevented them up to now has been the opposition of their affiliates," a former chief executive of one of the networks told me in 1980. "And if as an officer of a network you do feel that the time has come for you to go in with cable, and you've awakened to the fact that nearly two-thirds of the affiliates are involved with cable systems, you're looking at only two out of every five affiliates who are angry at you. That's what brought ABC into cable."

In October of 1981, after considerable preparation, CBS inaugurated, with great fanfare and full-page newspaper ads, its CBS Cable cultural service. Like the ARTS service, CBS Cable was designed to be advertiser-supported rather than a premium pay service. But, unlike both ARTS and Bravo, CBS Cable, it was announced, would produce about sixty per cent of its own programming. CBS Cable was headed by experienced television people. Its president was Richard Cox, who was familiar with both the business side of commercial broadcasting and the production of theatrical works for television; and its programming chief was Jack Willis, formerly a producer at Channel 13 in New York, who had created several public-television programs, including "The Great American Dream Machine" and "The 51st State."

After these promising starts in cable cultural programming, another "quality" cable service went into operation, in June of 1982. This one, called the Entertainment Channel, was a joint

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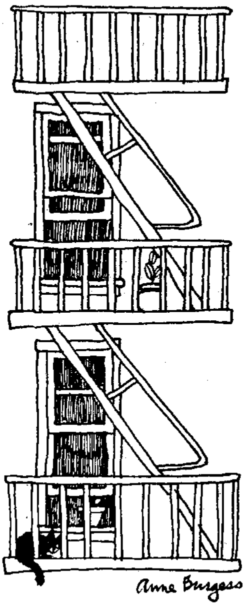
venture between the RCA Corporation, the corporate parent of NBC, and Rockefeller Center, Inc. The Entertainment Channel, a pay service, was launched on the basis of an elaborate study of the whole cable industry, which estimated that a pay-cable service carrying programs of high quality could break even within a couple of years. Such a scheme required considerable financing, however, and Rockefeller Center, Inc., had committed more than twenty-five million dollars to getting it under way. The man chosen as president and chairman of the Entertainment Channel was Arthur Taylor, who had been the president of CBS from 1972 to 1976, and who, in that role, had been considered one of the most active opponents of the cable industry and one of the most influential lobbyists against cable in Congress and at the F.C.C.

It appears that the original intent of the board of Rockefeller Center, Inc., was to start a cultural service more or less on the order of CBS Cable, but after much discussion Taylor and his associates decided to create a service with a broader audience appeal than they expected CBS Cable to have. While Taylor, in interviews with the press when the Entertainment Channel was starting up, said that he preferred not to use so highbrow a word as "culture," he made it clear that the service would include programs of a kind not available on network television. More than fifty per cent of them would consist of BBC material, ranging from situation comedies to original dramas, and executives at the Entertainment Channel boasted that they had pulled off something of an international programming coup by making a contractual arrangement with the BBC under which the Entertainment Channel could take its pick of some five thousand yearly hours of programming, and use the programs it purchased on an exclusive licensing basis in this country. The rest of its programs would come from American sources and foreign-film distributors.



By the time the Entertainment Channel went into operation, it might have appeared to people reading press accounts of the cable industry in general, and, in particular, of the entry of the big commercial television networks, and even RCA itself, into the creation of satellite-distributed cultural cable services, that a new era was under way, in which the importance of the programs being offered by the public-television system in this country—a system that had been created as a badly needed alternative to commercial television broadcasting, and that operated with the help of federal subsidies—was likely to be eclipsed.

And, indeed, this was an impression that appeared to be making itself felt in Congress, not to mention the higher levels of the Reagan Administration. The Administration was already in the process of reducing federal support of the arts. And members of the Reagan Administration—in the Office of Management and Budget, at the F.C.C., and in the White House itself—were reported to be in agreement that the "cable revolution," with its satellite-distributed services available to subscribers on either a pay or an advertiser-supported basis, and with all the possibilities of "narrowcast" programming to specialized audiences, meant that the time was rapidly approaching when there would be no further need for public broadcasting as a federally aided institution. These people were said to be convinced that with the advent of the cable cultural services any desire on the part of the American public for cultural and educational programs on television could now be satisfied through the marketplace. Thus, it was reasoned, the Entertainment Channel, with its exclusive contract for its BBC material, would rob public television of some of its best programming; the ARTS service would compete with public television in the area of theatrical and musical performances; the need for children's programming would be filled by the Warner Amex Nickelodeon service; and so on.

In this unpropitious atmosphere, federal appropriations for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting—the body created by the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 to apportion federal funds to assist the operation of individual public-television and radio stations—were cut back sharply. In April of 1981, three months after the Reagan Administration began, the Office of Management and Budget, in a statement outlining President Reagan's plans for reducing federal expenditures, asserted that there was "no overriding national justification" for financing the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. For the fiscal year 1982, appropriations for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting were a hundred and seventy-two million dollars—the highest they have ever been—but for the fiscal year 1983 this figure was cut by thirty-five million. And in 1982 the O.M.B. made it known that it wanted further, progressive reductions until, for fiscal 1985, appropriations for public television would amount to less than half those for fiscal 1982.

At the beginning of 1982, in the midst of this financial upheaval, I talked to Lawrence K. Grossman, then the president of the Public Broadcasting Service (last year, he became president of NBC News), and, as one could expect, found him deeply disturbed over the difficulties that public television was encountering. "The federal support for public television has been slashed to ribbons," he told me. "We're being informed that we're no longer needed, because the commercial-television marketplace, with the use of all these new technologies such as cable, will take care of the supply of the kind of television programs public television has been putting out. And so we run the risk of not surviving." Grossman found it particularly galling to see the existence of public television being threatened at a time when, he declared, it had been putting on what he thought was "the greatest program schedule in our history," with, among other programs, "Brideshead Revisited," "Creativity with Bill Moyers," "American Playhouse," "Life on Earth," and "The MacNeil/Lehrer Report"—all of which had been presented with the help of federal funding. He went on, "The process of national public-television programming and funding has been a very delicate threading together of federal funds, not only from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting but from other federally funded institutions such as the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, the National Science Foundation, and the Department of Education. For example, the Department of Education helped fund 'Sesame Street,' the National Science Foundation helped fund 'Nova,' and the National Endowment for the Arts helped fund our Metropolitan Opera broadcasts. And while the direct federal subsidies to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting have been cut severely, the federal funds for the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities have also been stripped, support for the National Science Foundation has been gutted, and the Department of Education is to be put out of business altogether. These organizations are therefore under tremendous financial pressure, and the result is that we're at risk of losing much of their existing support."

Grossman said that if one added to all these difficulties the serious reductions in federal financial aid to the states, which were a major source of income for public television, and the effect of the recession on program-underwriting funds from big corporations, the crisis for public television was all the more serious. And concerning the proposed Administration cure for the situation—the idea that the marketplace would be entirely capable of satisfying cultural-television-programming needs—he told me, "I gave a talk in Boston a while ago about public television, and in it I said that the marketplace was a wonderful thing but that it had nothing to do with public television. Public television should exist outside the marketplace—the school system does, after all. You don't want an educational system where McDonald's is paying for the textbooks. And shortly afterward I ran into Mark Fowler, the chairman of the F.C.C., who had read about my remarks, and he said, 'How can you say something like that? If there's a marketplace need for public television, it'll survive, and if not it shouldn't!' "

As for the new commercial cable cultural services, Grossman, while wishing them well, expressed considerable skepticism about their ability to survive in the prevailing market atmosphere. "We know from our experience at PBS that the greatest performing-arts programs that we have run—for example, the one with Pavarotti, Marilyn Horne, and Joan Sutherland in combination at a really spectacular concert at Lincoln Center—were viewed on television by no more than five per cent of the available audience," he said. And he went on to say that since the total national cable audience was at present only a third of the audience reached by broadcast television, he could see no way for CBS Cable, say, to put on major productions where even a sizable fraction of the production costs could be met through the sale of advertising on the programs involved.

Speaking of the high costs of television production and of the particular difficulties that public television always had to contend with in getting hold of enough funds to put together its own productions, Grossman told me, "The only way we have been able to avoid such high costs has been to buy programs that have already been made for another market. That's why we've had a lot of British programs—they were cheap programming for us to buy. In fact, it has sometimes occurred to me that if the British didn't speak English there might not *be* national public television in America." He said that many people in this country tended to be misled about the quality of British television in general by the quality of the programs they watched here on public television. And of the exclusive contract that the Entertainment Channel had for BBC programs he said, "There is no way the Entertainment Channel can fill up its channel with BBC products and get people to pay for it. The BBC stuff that we carry on public television represents only two or three per cent of our own schedule, and it's the best the BBC has to offer. While the British technical transmission standards are superior to ours, most of their programming is vastly overrated. The same goes for the French and Italian television programming, by the way—most of it is awful, too. As time goes on, we find that there's less and less BBC programming that we're really interested in buying for public television. As a matter of fact, most of our 'Masterpiece Theatre' programs that originate in Britain at present come not from the BBC but from the independent program companies." And Grossman spoke of the financial problems being encountered by the BBC in getting government permission to raise its compulsory viewer license fees, so, as he remarked, "in a way, they're in worse trouble over there than public television is here."

FOR all the declarations by the Reagan Administration that the expansion of commercial cable television was consigning public television to oblivion, at least as a medium that ought to have federal help, and for all the optimistic statements of the people in charge of the commercial cable cultural services about their progress in

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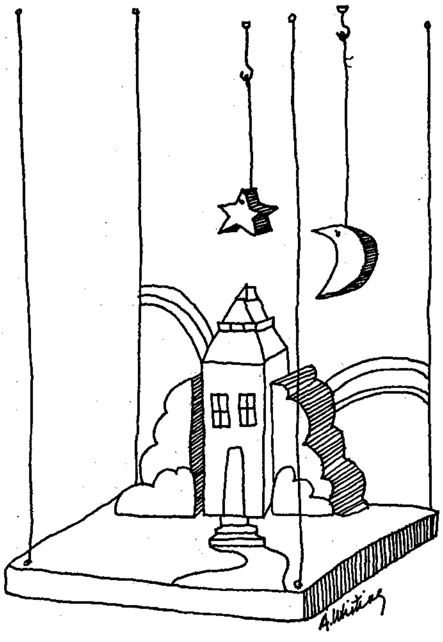
obtaining viewers, those advertiser-supported, commercial services encountered heavy going from the start. Their main practical problems boiled down to the size of the audience they were able to attract and the degree of support they found they were able to obtain from advertisers. Their difficulties had a particularly ironic ring in that CBS and the other networks had originally become a major power in American business through campaigns in which their executives convinced the Madison Avenue advertising agencies and their clients of the superiority of mass-audience television as a selling medium.

These network people had been united with the advertising people in the idea that attempting to fragment the mass audience—to appeal separately to its parts, rather than to the whole—was economically inefficient. A few of those now in charge of the commercial cable cultural channels were former leaders in mass-audience advertising (Richard Cox, the president of CBS Cable, had previously been a senior executive at Young & Rubicam and vice-president in charge of television and radio at Doyle Dane Bernbach), and they have said that they found, in their travels up and down Madison Avenue to advocate the virtues of cable-television cultural programming, that while they might be able to sell some time for corporate "institutional" advertising for their services, most of the people they approached reacted coolly to the prospect of putting real advertising money into them—especially during a period of recession. The CBS Cable people had trouble convincing the advertising people that, as Cox put it to me at the time, "we're getting an upscale audience because of the quality of our programs," since ad-agency media buyers "have been educated to get the best cost-per-thousand buy they can, and we have to educate them" about the special nature of cable cultural programming. Unfortunately, the educating process didn't go well. Although by the spring of 1982 the CBS Cable people were able to point out that the service was being sent to four million cabled homes over three hundred and fifty cable systems, the audience these figures presumably indicated was trifling to advertising executives, who were accustomed to putting their commercials on programs reaching audiences in the scores of millions. Moreover, there seemed to be no way that CBS Cable salesmen could convincingly demonstrate precisely how many people among the homes wired for the service were actually watching its programs. And even if CBS Cable was able to get a sizable amount of the one-to-two-per-cent share of the TV audience its service reached—a small fraction of what the most popular PBS shows could attract—the figures were still negligible by Madison Avenue's cost-per-thousand-viewers standards.

In the meantime, the financial losses of the new cultural services were mounting ominously. Even as the deficits soared, the people in charge of CBS Cable were besieged by representatives of various nonprofit cultural institutions, lured by all the publicity about the promise of cultural cable. The CBS Cable executives sat through what Jack Willis referred to as "lengthy lunches, with cultural-institution people who had somehow been caught up in all the hype about the cable gold rush saying to us, 'Now that federal funds are being pulled out of the arts, how can we get into cable? How can you help us?' " There was nothing much the CBS Cable executives could tell them, Willis said, except "We're not in a position to help you."

In addition to all these difficulties, the fact that the CBS broadcasting network had been consistently hostile to cable over the years, especially during Taylor's presidency, hardly warmed the operators of multiple cable systems to the idea of relaying a cultural service that many of them saw as an opening ploy by the networks to intrude themselves into the cable industry. And, indeed, some of the biggest cable operators in the country wouldn't even give the CBS Cable service a trial.



As the deficits at CBS Cable worsened, its executives looked about for other solutions to their problems. One was to turn CBS Cable into a pay service without ads. But the projected revenues from a pay service were considered insufficient. Then the parent CBS company tried to interest a number of film and cable concerns in a joint venture, but none of these potential partners were willing to risk the necessary capital. As a last resort, CBS attempted to work out a merger between its cable service and the much smaller Bravo pay cultural service. But those negotiations broke down, too. Shortly afterward, the CBS parent company threw in the towel. In September of 1982, eleven months after it had started up with such high hopes, CBS Cable announced that it would cease operation in ninety days. In closing down, the service severed its connection with five hundred and thirty-five cable systems possessing a total of five million subscribers. For the most part, the quality of the service had been highly praised, but in its eleven months of operation CBS Cable had succeeded in attracting no more than thirty advertising sponsors. "We were seeking very upscale advertisers, to whom cable advertising was a luxury," Thomas Leahy, the executive vice-president of the CBS Broadcast Group, told a reporter for *Advertising Age*. "Given the bad economy, these dollars dried up." The loss to CBS was estimated to be thirty million dollars.

After that disastrous foray into cultural programming on cable, CBS was to make no further attempt to involve itself in any kind of cable-network programming until the end of 1984, when it bought minority interests in four pay-cable sports services operated by SportsChannel, up to then jointly owned by the Washington Post Company and Rainbow Program Enterprises, an affiliate of the Cablevision Systems Corporation. As part of that deal, CBS also picked up a fifty-per-cent interest in Cablevision's Rainbow Service Company, which produces Bravo, and a service called American Movie Classics, which is devoted to the transmission of mostly pre-1970 movies. But the heart of these CBS acquisitions lay in sports, not cultural, programming.

While CBS Cable had been announcing its imminent demise, the RCA–Rockefeller Center, Inc., pay-cable service was also encountering difficulties. These difficulties did not take Arthur Taylor by surprise. A short time before the Entertainment Channel went into operation, I had talked to Taylor about his plans for the service, and had found that while he was full of optimism and was convinced that there was a very large and growing audience that was "turning its back on television" and demanding programs of far higher quality than it was getting, he also took a fairly sober view of the obstacles that would have to be overcome before his service would be able to break even. "What people don't realize is how expensive it is to participate in the cable business, either as the owners of hardware, or transmission facilities, or as programmers, like us," he told me.

Taylor's concern about the difficulties inherent in presenting such a service was well founded. After the Entertainment Channel went into operation, only eighty-four cable systems agreed to carry it, and of a total of two and a half million subscribers whom these cable systems were reaching only fifty thousand agreed to subscribe to the pay service. Like the people at CBS Cable, Taylor and the others in charge of the Entertainment Channel had counted not only on attracting a far greater number of viewers than they actually did but also on the construction of cable systems in major cities that, by 1984 or 1985, would provide them with extra millions of viewers and the possibility of becoming profitable. But the recession meant that the cabling of major cities was well behind schedule, and in December of 1982, when Taylor went to a cable-industry meeting in Anaheim, California, and discovered the extent of the delays, he concluded that the Entertainment Channel wouldn't be able to survive as a pay-cable service. In February of 1983, the Entertainment Channel announced that it would close down by the end of the following month. In nine months of operation, the service had lost thirty-four million dollars. Among the so-called cultural services, that left only ARTS, the Hearst-ABC service, which reportedly had been losing money at the rate of eight million dollars a year, and the small Bravo service, also a money loser. In December of 1983, ARTS picked up whatever BBC program options the Entertainment Channel corporation still had control over, merging the remnants of the defunct service into its own operations, and in February of 1984 the combined service was launched as the Arts & Entertainment Network (A & E), a joint venture of the Hearst Corporation, ABC Video Enterprises, and RCA Cable. Since then, Arts & Entertainment has been getting along on a fairly modest basis, depending largely on BBC programming.

SINCE the failure of CBS Cable and the Entertainment Channel, PBS, in spite of all its financial troubles, has managed to scrape by. Its total audience has increased significantly in the last couple of years. This may be due in some measure to the fact that the signals of public-television UHF stations, which have limited area coverage and were formerly able to attract only a very small audience, are now more widely available, because they are relayed through recently constructed or expanded cable systems, which are obliged under F.C.C. regulations to carry local broadcast signals to their subscribers on available channels.

The failure of CBS Cable and the Entertainment Channel caused second thoughts among members of Congress about the Reagan Administration's attitude toward public television, and this reconsideration was spurred by a growing resentment among some of them at the shortcomings of commercial television in the area of public-service programming. Repeated attempts by the Reagan Administration to cut funding for public television have been vigorously resisted by various members of Congress, who have managed to increase the appropriations for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting from a hundred and thirty-seven and a half million dollars in the fiscal year 1984 to a hundred and fifty-nine and a half million dollars for the fiscal year 1986. Even so, last year President Reagan vetoed two bills providing money for public television, and this year, on May 16th, the Administration requested a cut of fourteen million dollars from the two hundred million that Congress has already appropriated for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for the fiscal year 1987. The tensions between the Administration and the corporation were dramatized very recently by the resignation of Edward J. Pfister, the president of the corporation, because of the opposition of the corporation's board and its Reagan-appointed chairman, Sonia Landau, to a planned trade mission to Moscow by public-television represen-

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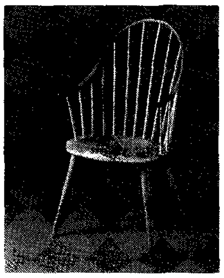
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tatives to discuss program sales and acquisitions, and possible co-production agreements. Pfister was said to have become convinced that the board's opposition to the mission constituted part of a pattern of political interference in the internal affairs of the public-broadcasting organization.

The shortcomings of commercial television in the area of public-service programming have not been the subject of notable remedial efforts by federal regulatory activity. For example, the F.C.C. watered down a long-standing requirement that applicants for commercial broadcast licenses agree to provide, throughout their weekly schedules, a reasonable amount of children's programming. The practical effect of the rewritten requirement is to degrade the previous rule into a largely meaningless generality as far as preschool television programming is concerned. And the networks, which are not directly subject to F.C.C. regulations concerning balanced content, have themselves largely given up children's programming, except for occasional specials and the Saturday-morning cartoon shows, which they surround with toy and junk-food commercials. In any case, weekend viewing is known to occupy only ten per cent of the average total time children spend watching television. "Captain Kangaroo," the CBS early-morning show for children, was about the last holdout among such programs on weekdays, and CBS yanked it out of the weekday schedule in 1982, to make room for a news-and-talk show from six to nine in the morning. At NBC, however, Grossman, since becoming president of the network's news division, has been planning to start a series consisting of a news-and-information program for children that would be broadcast once a month. In the series, NBC news correspondents would interview children wherever news is developing—from Nicaragua to the People's Republic of China. But as for commercial television broadcasting generally, a recent survey by Action for Children's Television shows that two-thirds of all commercial TV stations carry no children's programming at all on weekdays.

Interestingly, Republicans and Democrats seem to have joined in championing public television in the face of the failure of commercial television to supply services of comparable quality. One result of this reaction has been a partial restoration of congressionally authorized appropriations for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. But despite these and other efforts by its backers in Congress, public television in this country may be the most underfunded system of any developed country in the world if one were to judge by the relative per-capita amounts that various federal governments devoted to subsidizing public television in 1981: Canada, about nineteen dollars; Japan, fourteen dollars; Britain, about eleven dollars; the United States, sixty-four cents.

With Mark Fowler as chairman, the F.C.C., in trying to adapt government policies to the realities of a vastly expanded and diversified communications industry, has committed itself to a course of wholesale deregulation affecting virtually all parts of the industry. In pursuit of this course, the F.C.C. appears to be intent on relaxing or removing many, if not most, of the major F.C.C. rules devised in an earlier, less complex era of broadcasting. The F.C.C.'s most prominent target, according to industry reports, appears to be the concept of the government's role as trustee of the public interest in the broadcast and cable industries. The agency has made plain its readiness to abandon not only those rules which have supported the trustee concept but also the very foundation of the trustee concept itself: the assumption that the airwaves are as much a part of the nation's natural resources as are its national parks and waterways.

In the past, broadcast frequencies have been let out without fee to broadcasters who agreed to use them in the public interest, but it has always been made clear to the broadcasters that they did not own these frequencies; the government never abdicated its sovereignty over the airwaves themselves. In fact, the Communications Act of 1934 specified that when broadcasters received licenses to use certain frequencies no property rights to those frequencies were to accrue to them. Now, however, the F.C.C. appears to be abandoning this assumption in favor of the proposition that television and radio broadcast licenses should be largely presumed to be automatically renewable for any responsible broadcaster. In other words, the government is in effect giving to communications corporations or conglomerates what was once recognized as the property of the American people—a huge windfall that will be reckoned as part of the real assets of these corporations.

As for the cable industry, the F.C.C. seems to have reversed its position since the early nineteen-sixties, when the telephone companies and the TV networks were attempting to throttle the new competition. While the broadcasters were crusading against cable, the F.C.C. generally sided with the broadcasting establishment and placed severe restrictions on the cable industry—restrictions that remained in force for several years. But in 1975, when Time, Inc., began to use communications satellites rather than telephone-company microwave and other relay equipment to transmit HBO programming to subscriber cable systems, cable broke free of the restraints that had confined it for a decade. This changed situation allowed the big cable companies to assert their growing influence on Capitol Hill and in the offices of the F.C.C., and to adopt an increasingly aggressive attitude toward the city authorities whom they had long been besieging for cable franchises. The companies' basic purpose was to bring about federal legislation to reduce local and state regulatory authority over cable, and to increase their own control over the system of conduits they were licensed to use in cities, while establishing complete control over the content of their services. (Oddly, such a dual role was just what the big cable companies had found objectionable in proposals made by A.T. & T. to Congress in 1980 that would have permitted A.T. & T., in addition to acting as a communications common carrier, to initiate electronic information services that would be transmitted over its own facilities. In fact, for

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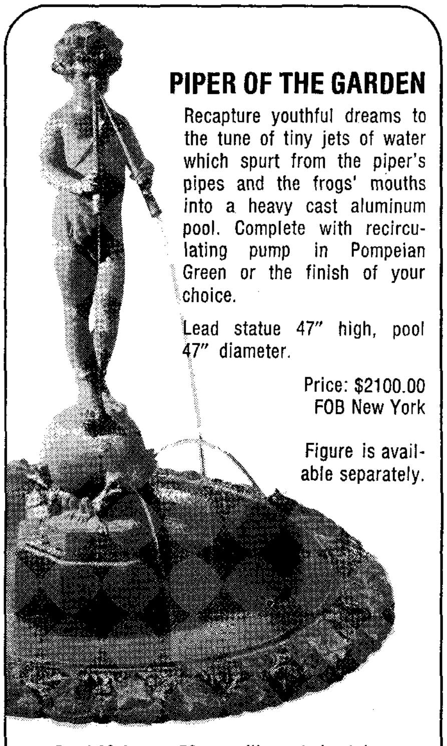
more than half a century prohibition of such a dual role had been at the heart of federal regulation of the A.T. & T. telephone monopoly.) Further, the cable companies wanted the federal government to pass legislation giving them virtually automatic renewal of their franchises.

While the municipal and state licensing authorities seemed to be the main target of the cable companies, the federal government itself—and specifically the F.C.C.—was also under attack. The principal reason for this was that beginning in the mid-nineteen-seventies the government had eased its regulation of the cable industry so much that it had left a regulatory vacuum—a vacuum that was filled, in part, by states, counties, and cities. Because the resulting regulations were developed and applied piecemeal, a number of people in Congress came to believe that a reassertion of federal authority might be needed to bring about coherence. But since the F.C.C. is now headed by people who advocate not merely deregulation but also what Chairman Fowler has called "unregulation," one probable effect of a transfer of local and state powers over cable to the federal government could be their consignment into a federal regulatory void; this could leave the cable companies free to run their local monopolies virtually unregulated.

And that is the way things seem to have worked out. In spite of the opposition of the National League of Cities and related organizations, the upshot of all the lobbying by cable interests was the passage by Congress last October 11th of the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984. In brief, the act freed cable-system operators from all local regulation of subscription rates except in a relatively small percentage of cases, which were to be decided by the F.C.C. As a concession to local and state licensing authorities, the act allowed them to collect as much as five per cent of the cable companies' gross revenues in fees. But it granted cable operators essentially automatic renewal of their licenses, provided, among other conditions, that they had complied in "reasonable" fashion with the conditions of their franchises. Moreover, the cable act prohibited telephone companies—the old and feared enemies of cable—from entering the cable business in their own service areas, and it also prohibited the treatment, by any level of government, of cable-television service as a common carrier or a utility. As for the ability of cable systems to act as common carriers of business data and similar highly specialized services, that question was left to the F.C.C.; the cable legislation took a neutral position on the issue.

GIVEN all the struggles and difficulties, the prejudice and hostility that cable television, in the early part of its short history, had to endure at the hands of powerful forces within the communications establishment—the commercial television networks and stations, the telephone companies, the F.C.C., even the movie-theatre operators—it might seem reasonable to suppose that cable, having established itself as something more than an industry, would go on to provide program services increasingly distinct in kind and quality from those being offered by commercial television. Yet if, in the aftermath of the failure of CBS Cable and the Entertainment Channel, one considers the kinds of services that the cable industry has been relying on to attract subscribers what is striking is how, as time goes on, the programming is coming more and more to resemble what is offered on broadcast television—except that on pay channels there are no commercials. For all the earlier talk of cable-industry executives about the social benefits of the many diverse services that could be offered, perhaps cable's most distinctive contribution to programming so far—outside of the twenty-four-hour news coverage on Ted Turner's CNN and the C-SPAN coverage of governmental affairs—has been MTV. And, at that, the videos on MTV have been produced by record companies, not by the cable service itself. MTV may be a boon to rock fans, it is true, but has it been worthwhile to lay down those tens of thousands of miles of coaxial cable throughout the country for this? Actually, the principal stock-in-trade of the cable industry consists not of specialized services for specific audiences—the "narrowcasting" that the cable industry enthusiasts liked to boast about in the early days of the industry—but, rather, of movies, and, from what I've seen, movies that are repeated too often and that include too much junk.

As cable is increasingly treated as another lowest-common-denominator mass medium along the lines of commercial television, the difficulties experienced by the bigger cable companies in connection with the long-promised cabling of the big cities have in many



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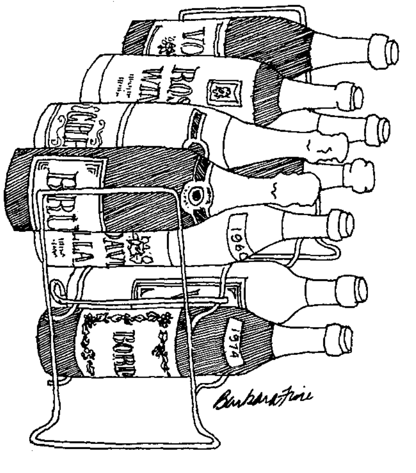
instances deepened. In large part, this has occurred because of the unexpectedly high capital costs of the construction of coaxial-cable pathways and of associated equipment, and because of a serious overestimation by cable companies of the number of subscribers likely to be attracted to cable service in those areas. In addition, the difficulties that many cable companies have found themselves in have been exacerbated by problems resulting from poor management and from such matters as shoddy installation of cable connections in homes and indifference to subscriber complaints—about alleged billing errors and the inability to get cable-company people on the telephone or to get cable-system repairmen when they're needed; about having to put up with onscreen images that suddenly blank out or become uncomprehensibly scrambled; and so on.

And there is a widespread disenchantment with the quality of the programs being offered. When new subscribers are connected to a cable system, they tend to display a certain zest in experimenting with it. They look at the movies on the HBO and Cinemax pay services, and talk about how much easier it is to see these at home, and without the constant interruptions of commercials, than it is to arrange for babysitters, make dinner reservations at restaurants, find parking space, and so on, in order to go out to a movie house. Then perhaps they experiment with other offerings around the cable channels—the Weather Channel, the round-the-clock news channels, the scrolls of text on the want-ad channels, the recipes on the homemakers' channels, the domestic dramas on the Hispanic channels; in a few big cities, they may even puzzle for a while over the Chinese- or Japanese-language shows. But it isn't long before they get used to all that, and eventually many of them also get a bit bored with the kinds of movies being offered on HBO and Cinemax, most of which seem no better than those the subscribers had been able to see on the commercial TV networks, without subscription charge, before cable companies began beating the networks to the punch for the same movies. On pay TV, such movies are rerun over and over. After a while, viewers may begin to feel that they could improve things by changing the pay services they receive. Instead of subscribing to, say, Cinemax, they may switch to Showtime/the Movie Channel; and they may go on to try different combinations of pay-cable services, making frequent changes, and just as often becoming dissatisfied with what they have been getting—a sequence of events that has come to be known in the business as "churn." And churn involves a great number of disconnections, reconnections, and rebillings, with a risk of further service troubles of a kind that subscribers already tend to be plagued with. Such difficulties tend to make subscribers considerably more selective about what they are willing to put up with on cable. Many cable subscribers seem willing to forgo pay services altogether, and settle for basic cable service, which simply gives them a clearer image of programs relayed by their cable system from the commercial network and local TV stations and brings in some distant signals otherwise not receivable.

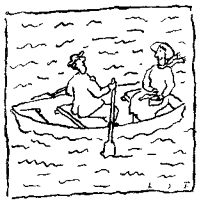
More and more cable subscribers have been buying videocassette recorders, with which they can record shows off their cable systems or off the networks and watch them at times of their own choosing—a practice known in the business as "time-shifting." Although time-shifting may increase the accessibility of certain cable programs to many subscribers, the cable-industry people nonetheless appear to be worried—as the commercial broadcasters certainly are—about the effects of VCRs on revenues from advertiser-supported program services. They fear that if time-shifting spreads sufficiently it may play havoc with the prevailing audience-ratings system upon which advertising agencies rely so heavily. And the advertising people complain that the use of VCRs by cable subscribers is throwing into confusion the measurement of which parts of the cable audiences are watching which programs, and when. Furthermore, the advertising people appear to be disturbed by what they consider another hateful practice, known on Madison Avenue as "zapping": when a VCR-owning cable subscriber eventually plays an advertiser-supported program that he has previously recorded, he has the ability, when a commercial starts, to quickly skip over it by pressing the fast-forward button—zapping it—and thereby frustrating the purpose of the advertising people who put their money into the show. And so the great recent increase in VCR ownership, accompanied by the increase in time-shifting and in zapping commercials, appears to have underlined whatever uncertainties many advertising people already may have been having about the desirability of using cable as a major advertising medium.



But the effect on cable companies of time-shifting by VCR owners is minor compared with the popularity of using VCRs to play rented videocassettes of movies. By now, probably three-quarters of the approximately eighteen million VCR owners in this country—nearly seven million VCRs were sold in 1984 alone—are renting movies on videocassette. Of course, it's also possible to buy videocassettes of movies outright, but very few are sold, for they can cost up to ninety dollars apiece, whereas a movie on cassette rents generally for a few dollars a day from one of the twenty-one thousand video stores that have sprung up in the last few years. The rise in the popularity of movie videocassettes—a popularity that has almost certainly been encouraged by dissatisfaction among viewers with the quality and fixed scheduling of cable-service programming—has begun significantly to decrease the dependence of many subscribers on the big cable movie services. If the cable industry were to lose its current audience for movies—its principal subscriber-producing fare—it would be very hard pressed, and so it tends to view the growth of the videocassette market as a new, non-cable form of pay-per-view television, which could siphon considerable business away from even the biggest pay-cable services.

In reaction to this situation, some leading forces in the cable industry have been showing a keen interest in reviving pay-per-view—the technology through which cable subscribers, usually by telephoning their local cable system, can request particular movies, sporting events, or other popular programming. The cable system relays the programs to the viewers, and the viewers, who are automatically charged for each feature they request, are billed monthly for the movies or other special programs. The cable companies say that one advantage of pay-per-view is that while many local video stores stock only a few videocassettes of a particular film for sale or rental, a cable company can make the film available to a large number of viewers simultaneously.

In Hollywood, too, a number of executives at the big movie studios have renewed their enthusiasm for pay-per-view, which had manifested itself at the beginning of the decade but then faded. There are two reasons for this second look. First, the studios' revenues from videocassettes are derived only from the first sale and not from any subsequent rentals, and, second, the studio executives believe that a pay-per-view system could allow the studios to profit from every showing of a film by that system. At present, only about three-quarters of a million cable households are equipped for pay-per-view reception. But according to estimates by Paul Kagan Associates, a well-known broadcast and cable-industry consulting firm, that number might go to over twenty million in the next five years, and pay-per-view annual revenues, which totalled a modest twenty-six million dollars last year, could rise to more than two billion dollars within a decade.



In the meantime, the cable industry has had to reckon with the development of other, non-cable technologies capable of carrying TV programming into homes. Some of these pose no great threat to cable for the present. Commercial direct-broadcast-satellite programming, in which signals are to be transmitted from satellites directly into roof or back-yard dish antennas, is one of these technologies. In fact, United Satellite Communications, the first and only commercially operating direct-broadcast-satellite company in this country, which started in 1982, filed for protection from creditors under Chapter 11 of the federal Bankruptcy Code earlier this year, because of a lack of operating capital. Systems for over-the-air subscription-television programming are non-wired pay-TV outfits that only a few years ago were supposed to be headed for a commercially brilliant future, but few of them have survived the growth of urban cable systems.

Yet potentially competitive technologies have been a cause of considerable concern among holders of urban cable-television franchises. These include multi-point distribution systems, which relay satellite or other program services to apartment and other building complexes in cities via point-to-point microwave transmission. Another home-video technology that seems to be bothering the cable-franchise holders uses satellite-broadcast technology and is known as a satellite master-antenna system, or SMATV. These systems use master-antenna receiving dishes, which to date have been mounted mainly on the roofs of apartment buildings and condominiums, and can receive pay-television programs directly from orbiting communications satellites, with the programs being fed to subscribers in the buildings by internal cables. SMATV systems may compete especially with cable in cities where cable hasn't yet been firmly established. Unlike urban cable-franchise holders, SMATV operators are able to move in quickly to wire certain types of buildings; because they do not use municipal rights-of-way but build their systems on private property, they don't need the permission of municipal franchising authorities to operate, and they also are exempt from F.C.C. regulation. (Because of this special status, SMATV people like to refer to their systems as "private cable.") When operators of master-antenna systems jump in and make offers to landlords to wire high-rise apartment complexes, many of the landlords have an incentive to go along with the arrangement, because they can bargain with the SMATV people for a percentage of the monthly subscription fees SMATV-connected householders will be charged. In fact, a number of landlords of big apartment houses have themselves gone into the SMATV business on a joint-venture basis with SMATV entrepreneurs, with the result that a considerable part of the SMATV business is controlled by real-estate interests.

The development of SMATV was so little to the taste of cable-franchise holders that in 1983 John Raines, an SMATV operator who until recently was chairman of the National Satellite Cable Association, a trade group, testified before a Senate communications subcommittee that major cable-industry program suppliers were unwilling to supply SMATV op-

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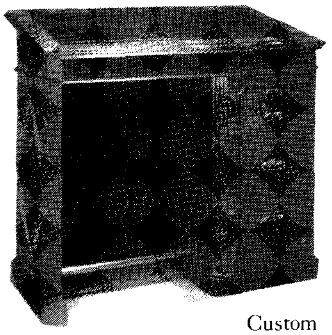

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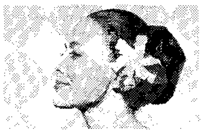

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erators. Such complaints seem all too reminiscent of those which the cable-television operators, in getting their industry under way, used to make concerning their hard treatment at the hands of the commercial broadcast establishment. But lately things seem to have changed; the SMATV business has been expanding sufficiently that the big cable-program suppliers have been providing SMATV operators with their services, and some urban cable companies have gone into the SMATV business themselves.

As things now stand, even the powerful HBO, with its fourteen and a half million subscribers, and its associated Cinemax service, with three and a half million subscribers, which together, only a relatively short while ago, were being considered as the greatest outside force—and an apparently unstoppable one—operating in the movie industry, have been losing some momentum. HBO's falling off has been influenced by a number of developments, including increased competition from Showtime/the Movie Channel; the boom in the use of VCRs and the great popularity in VCR-owning households of playing videocassettes of movies; and, perhaps above all, as far as many viewers are concerned, the uneven quality of the HBO program offerings themselves. Whatever the causes, in the first quarter of this year the number of subscribers who disconnected their HBO service greatly increased, and in 1984 the company, which had attracted more than two million new subscribers in 1983, wound up gaining only about a million.

As a matter of fact, the faltering of HBO's expansion, especially as it relates to VCRs and videocassette rentals, has given many Hollywood studio people the sense that, after having twice missed the chance to obtain control over the electronic means of film distribution, first with the TV networks and then with the cable industry, they now may have new opportunities for gaining control over the distribution of their productions in electronic form. As for Time, Inc., itself, the HBO people appear to have been sufficiently concerned about the potential impact of VCRs and videocassettes on their business that they branched out into this area, forming a joint venture with Thorn EMI Video to acquire and distribute videocassettes.

In anticipation of that move, an internal HBO "briefing book," dated May 23, 1984, excerpts from which were quoted in an article in *Broadcasting* last November, pointed out that with the popularity of videocassettes made by the big studios "HBO's cable TV distribution network is in danger of being cannibalized." The briefing paper also pointed out the further threat of the studios' distributing their films to cable subscribers on a pay-per-view basis. An analysis summarized in the briefing paper estimated that where the movie studios might derive an average of a dollar and forty-four cents in income from each sale or rental of a movie to a VCR owner, they might make between two and two and a half dollars per transaction from the transmission of the movie via pay-per-view. And the analysis suggested that "a substantial segment of the pay TV universe could migrate from [cable] subscription services to opportunistic use of PPV," and that "these subscribers may be lost to HBO unless we are a major factor in PPV programming." However, the authors of the paper appear not to have been treating pay-per-view as anything resembling an irresistible force; rather, they seem to have been suggesting the possibility of HBO's getting into pay-per-view primarily as a defensive marketing strategy.

Aside from the "cannibalizing" influence of videocassettes of Hollywood films, HBO, like other satellite-distributed cable services, and the franchised cable systems themselves have been plagued by various sorts of piracy on the part of non-paying viewers. Each year, huge sums are said to be lost through various kinds of service theft—among them illegal tapping into cables. The theft-of-service problem has been added to by the rapid growth in the use of back-yard dish antennas—more than a million of these have been installed by American homeowners—which enable their owners to pick up TV programming from orbiting communications satellites. The back-yard-dish business—and piracy by TV owners—has been expanding so fast that this fall HBO is planning to start scrambling its pay-TV signals and those of the Cinemax service; one HBO official recently told *Newsweek* that the company loses seven hundred million dollars a year in potential revenues to dish-antenna piracy, and the company is determined to stop this drain. When HBO does scramble its programming signals, dish-antenna owners could receive an intelligible image on their TV screens only by paying regular HBO subscription rates and buying, at a cost of about four hundred dollars, decoding devices to be attached to their sets. But the dish-antenna manufacturers, who have their own trade association, the Society for Private and Commercial Earth Stations, are striking back; they have been lobbying congressmen in Washington for the passage of federal legislation that would restrict or delay the scrambling of satellite program-service signals.

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RECENTLY, the relations between the cable industry and the cities, which were poor to start with, have been made worse by the failure of the cable companies to live up to the often wildly extravagant promises concerning multi-channel program and other services that they made to municipalities in order to win local cable-franchise monopolies. These included promises to construct systems wired for eighty, a hundred, or even more channels, to introduce such innovations as interactive cable services, and to provide separate coaxial circuits that would convey streams of information between such municipal institutions as schools, libraries, and government offices. But, as things turned out, most of the public-service benefits that the cable companies promised the cities either were never provided or were provided in inadequate and often slipshod fashion. And most of the information and entertainment services that were made available to subscribers at premium fees were received with relatively little interest by cable viewers.

Rather than respond to this lack of enthusiasm on the part of audiences with serious attempts to broaden and generally raise the quality of service, the companies have begun aggressive campaigns to reduce or back away

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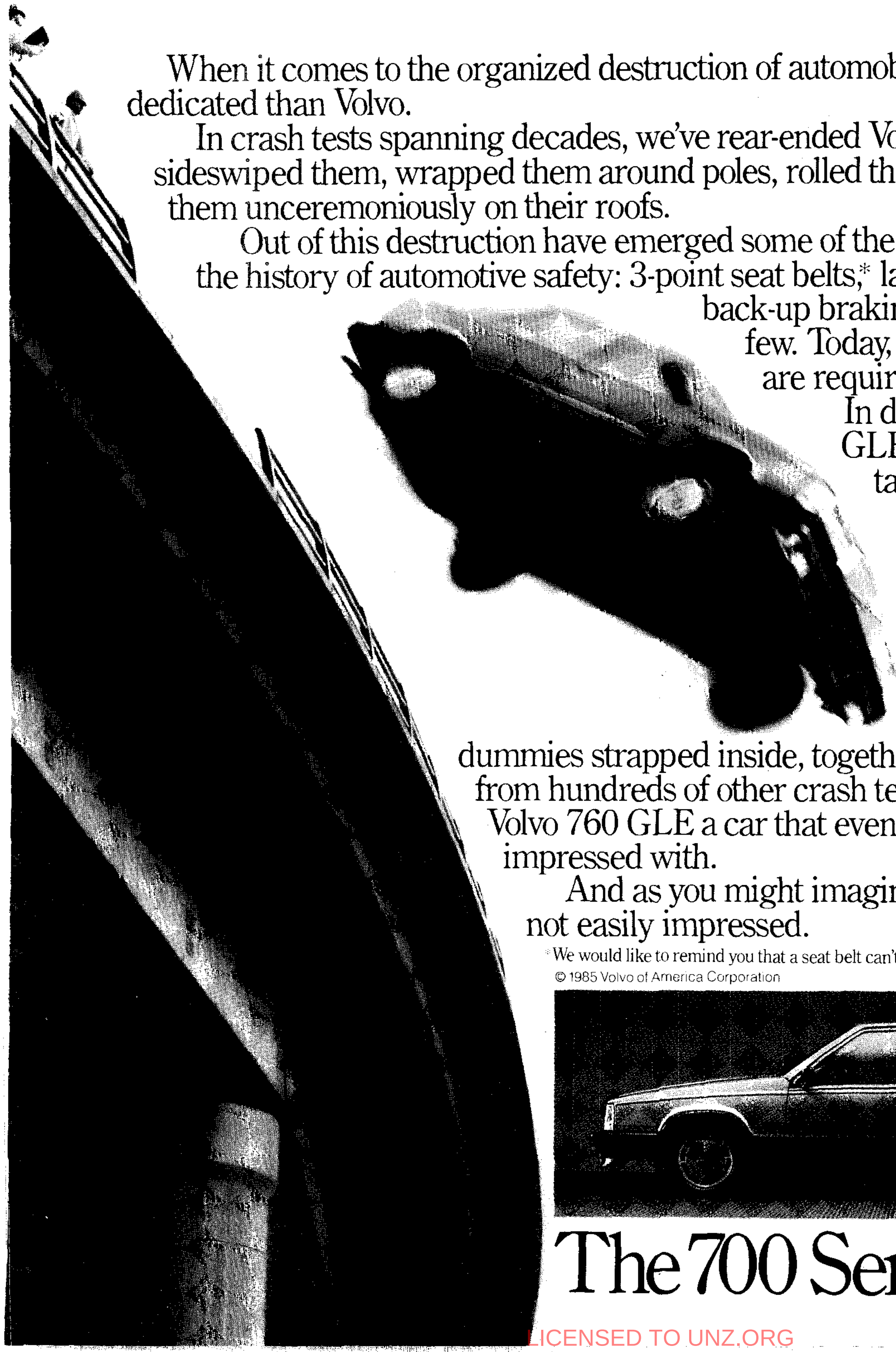

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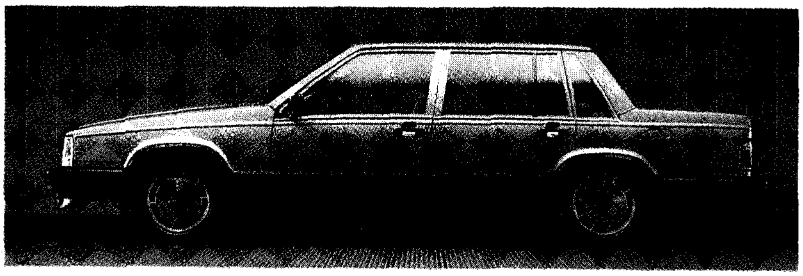

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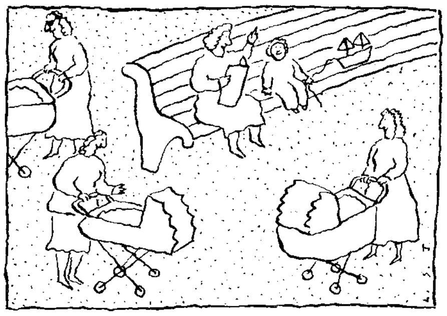
from their commitments. In 1983, Warner Amex eliminated its interactive QUBE services in Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Houston, and Dallas. In Houston, QUBE Cable, a system with a hundred and eighty-three thousand subscribers and gross revenues of sixty million dollars, had about the same number of subscribers this January as it did a year earlier. But a lot of people in Houston have been doing their own wiring; Texas has had no state law against theft of cable service, and so numerous Houston citizens have been getting QUBE service, on a one-way basis, for nothing. Two years ago in Dallas, criticism of the quality of the QUBE Cable service there rose to such a pitch that two of the city's newspapers were regularly running stories on subscribers' complaints about the service, beginning with the company's difficulties with answering telephone calls and ranging over several other aspects of the service. The company, claiming to have improved the service, puts the number of its subscribers at eighty-one thousand, of whom sixty thousand pay premium subscription rates for receiving movies and other features on a pay-per-view basis.

While these two big-city cable systems in Texas were experiencing problems, Warner Amex late last year negotiated the sale of its five-year-old Pittsburgh cable system to Tele-Communications, Inc., the largest owner of multiple cable-television systems in the country, for nearly ninety-four million dollars. News of the impending sale to TCI (which between 1973 and 1982 had increased its gross revenues more than tenfold, from twenty-six million six hundred thousand dollars to two hundred and eighty-two million six hundred thousand dollars) stirred up much turbulent discussion among municipal officials, some of whom considered the city to have been let down by Warner Amex in the light of all its promises of dazzling future cable services. In a talk with me during this period, Richard Emenecker, a Christian Brother who is director of the city's cable office, emphasized that adherence to broad standards of public service had been the basis of the grant of the cable franchise in the first place. "We had looked upon this whole cable system as a model community-communications complex that would provide superior service to our citizens on a nondiscriminatory basis," he told me some time before the sale of the Pittsburgh system took place. "In setting the standards for the design of this system, we expected it not only to set the course for electronic communications in Pittsburgh for the next several decades but also to serve as a benchmark for interactive community-cable systems throughout the country."

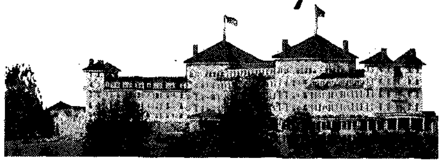
The attitude of the TCI people appeared to be quite different from Emenecker's, at least where interactive cable services were concerned. In February of last year, John Malone, the president of TCI, was quoted in *CableVision* as declaring that while he himself had been one of what he called the "inventors" of interactive cable service, the promotion of interactive cable in this country had been carried out "in order to get things through the F.C.C." Malone went on to say, "Two-way has been a franchising tool and a promotional gimmick for twelve years." Another article in that issue of *CableVision* described Malone as being "totally opposed" to two-way systems, on the ground that they were a financially burdensome and unnecessary form of cable service.

As interactive cable service was in the process of being eliminated in Pittsburgh and in other cable systems that had been part of the QUBE network, Warner Amex and other big multisystem owners continued to renegotiate the contractual commitments the companies had made in winning franchises. In many instances, these efforts seem largely to have succeeded. In Milwaukee, Warner Amex was able to obtain permission from municipal authorities to defer the delivery of its QUBE service there; to eliminate the requirement to install a second cable; to scale down the capabilities of a third cable that would allow cable-television and computer-data interconnections between various institutions in the city; and to get rid of its obligation to build a local-origination studio. As for the troubled Warner Amex cable system in Dallas, questions about its future were growing. By the beginning of May, rumors were circulating that Warner Amex Cable Communications was ready to entertain outside offers to buy it. By mid-May, after talk had increased on Wall Street that American Express was interested in selling its fifty-per-cent share in the joint venture, Warner Amex headquarters in New York indicated that the company had received several offers to buy all or part of it, including its interest in MTV and in Showtime/the Movie Channel.



Scaledowns or proposals for scaledowns of franchise conditions affecting systems owned by several other big cable companies were under way, too. In Omaha, Tucson, and Vancouver, Washington, where Cox Cable Communications, the fourth-largest multisystem owner in the United States, had systems in operation, the Cox people persuaded local authorities to allow them to put off the introduction of the company's interactive service, which had been promised as part of their franchise undertakings. In New Orleans, Cox Cable's interactive service has yet to be offered to subscribers, even though it was built into the Cox Cable service, which was turned on in 1982, and construction of an institutional cable network, as required under the terms of the New Orleans franchise, is as yet incomplete. Last year, Miami Cablevision, which is partly owned by TCI, was granted permission to eliminate a franchise requirement that its system be equipped for interactive cable. And in New York Warner Amex and the other cable-system franchise owners, who in the summer of 1983 signed fifteen-year franchise agreements for supplying cable services to the four outer boroughs, received an important technical concession from the city. The cabling of the outer boroughs was to be the biggest single cable project yet undertaken in the history of the industry. At the time the contracts were signed, the construction of these cable systems was expected to require seven years to complete, at a cost of at least a billion dollars, and eventually, it was estimated, these systems would reach more than two million households, which could then join the two hundred and seventy-five thousand in Manhattan already wired for cable service. The companies claimed that because of modifications made possible by recent advances in technology they could accommodate all the seventy channels required under the franchise agreements with the city on a single-wired system rather than a dual-wired system. And in March of 1984 the

The Lady



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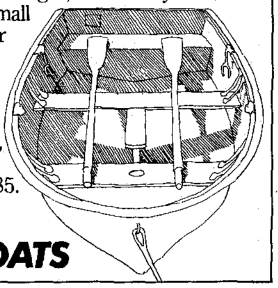

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Board of Estimate decided to go along with the requested reductions in wired facilities.

The big problem facing the companies that have undertaken the cabling of large cities is one of financing. At the time they were making frantic efforts to win city franchises, they neglected to make realistic reckoning of the huge cost of wiring major urban areas. Currently, it works out to about five hundred dollars for every household passed by the coaxial cables, or up to about a thousand dollars for each household that, according to general experience in the business, actually subscribes to basic and pay-cable service. In the outer boroughs of New York, the cable-franchise winners appear to have so overestimated their ability to build their systems that construction of the necessary lines and the installation of associated equipment has not even begun; and there does not seem to be any serious talk about being able to begin service, except perhaps on a partial basis, until 1986—a starting date that, if met, would come nineteen years after cable service first began in Manhattan.

In New York, the Bureau of Franchises is directly accountable to the Board of Estimate, whose members include the five borough presidents. For some time, the presidents of the outer boroughs have been under pressure from constituents who have been demanding to know why they can't get Yankees and Islanders games on their TV sets via the sports pay-cable channels, just as cable subscribers in Manhattan can. But while the politicians seem anxious to see the cable construction go swiftly forward, the power of the City of New York, like that of cities elsewhere, to insist that the cable companies live up to their promises may be impaired by the effects of the Cable Communications Policy Act, which has sharply reduced the cities' regulatory authority over cable.

One of the consequences of the cable act has been the expressed intention of cable companies in many cities to increase their subscriber fees for basic services. Another consequence is their increased confidence in making the most of their monopoly position in the cities where they are operating. Even before the new act, many of the cable companies seem to have been taking advantage of this position by refusing to carry certain services that might offer competition to major services in which their corporate owners appeared to have special interests. For example, subscribers to Manhattan Cable—which is owned by American Television and Communications, which is owned by Time, Inc., which, in turn, owns HBO and Cinemax—are unable to see programs carried on Showtime/the Movie Channel, a service that happens to be a direct competitor of HBO and Cinemax and that in other cities has been draining some of the audience away from HBO and Cinemax. Also, Manhattan Cable subscribers can't get the Bravo service. While Bravo is, admittedly, a tiny service compared with those run by the owners of Manhattan Cable, the fact that Manhattan Cable subscribers are being given no opportunity to judge for themselves the merits of the Bravo offerings raises questions about the failure of Manhattan Cable to carry a service that certainly would add to the diversity of its program schedule. John F. Gault, the president of Manhattan Cable, maintains that his system already offers a strong pay-service lineup, and that in any case technological considerations limit Manhattan Cable's ability to add new pay channels.

Considering the number of people in Manhattan who have shown interest in following some portion or another of the twenty-four-hour C-SPAN service, Manhattan Cable has shown a rather cavalier attitude toward carrying this, the best single public service that cable television has to offer. Subscribers to Manhattan Cable can follow C-SPAN through the day only by switching from channel to channel. Manhattan Cable carries it on Channel L from 1 A.M. until 6 P.M., when, to keep watching it, viewers have to switch to Channel M. Then, at 9 P.M., Manhattan Cable switches the service off altogether until 1 A.M., when it continues on Channel L again—a very confusing schedule. On Group W cable, in upper Manhattan, C-SPAN is given even more peremptory treatment: the service is cut off at 6 P.M.

THE trend toward concentration of power in the cable industry forms part of the trend toward larger and larger communications corporations and conglomerates. Only eighteen months ago, the News Corporation, Ltd., headed by the Australian newspaper tycoon Rupert Murdoch, made strenuous efforts to gain effective financial control over the entire Warner Communications complex.

Murdoch owns interests in an international array of newspaper, magazine, and television companies. Murdoch's holdings in Australia include forty-five newspapers and two television stations; in Britain, twenty-eight operating companies, whose media properties include the *Sun*, the *News of the World*, and the London *Times* and the *Sunday Times*, as well as a substantial interest in Reuters, the news agency, and majority control of Sky Channel, an ad-carrying television service that uses satellite transponders to beam English-language programs to European cable systems; and, in the United States, the New York *Post*, the *Village Voice*, *New York*, the Boston *Herald*, the Chicago *Sun-Times*, and the weekly national gossip sheet the *Star*. For fiscal year 1984, the revenues of the News Corporation totalled one billion eight hundred and sixty-five million dollars. Although Murdoch's acquisitions have included such respected newspaper institutions as the London *Times* and *Sunday Times*, Murdoch journalism is best known for the blazing-headline, sex-crime-and-gossip approach of some of his tabloids. Within the past several years, Murdoch, seeking to expand his newspaper empire still further, has developed an interest in branching out into new communications technologies.

d. ehrenberg

"I think all media are related," Murdoch was quoted as saying during an interview with Michael Schrage, of the Washington *Post*, in October of 1983. "All the skills involved are related. Putting together a newspaper that appeals to the public's taste is not all that different from putting together a programming schedule for a television network." The same year, Murdoch made a stab at entering the direct-satellite-broadcasting business in the United States. Through a newly created subsidiary called Skyband, he leased five satellite transponders, with the intention of serving at least five million of some twelve million households in this country that are considered too remotely situated or too widely spread out to be profitably hooked up to cable systems. Murdoch's people calculated that a good proportion of them might be willing to pay twenty-five or thirty dollars a month to receive an entertainment-and-news package via three-and-a-half-foot antennas installed on their roofs or in their back yards.

At about the same time, Murdoch, perhaps partly to assure himself of a source of programming for his Skyband project, made a move toward acquiring an interest in the Showtime cable service. This overture was conducted through Steven J. Ross, the chairman of Warner Communications, which itself was coming close to concluding negotiations to become a partner in a reorganized version of Showtime. But Murdoch's attempt to buy into Showtime didn't work out, and the service was subsequently merged with the Movie Channel into a new, dual service, called Showtime/the Movie Channel, with Warner Communications and Warner Amex Cable Communications as partners with Viacom International. With that, Murdoch backed away from the Skyband project, offering the public explanation that the operation of such a system should await technical improvements in satellite-to-home transmission facilities.

It was at this point that Murdoch turned his attention toward acquiring the entire Warner Communications complex—its television-and-movie-studio and film-distribution facilities, its record companies, and its share of the Warner Amex cable and satellite-communications systems and services. His organization began buying up large quantities of Warner Communications stock, using loans and working capital. In December of 1983, in conformity with Securities and Exchange Commission regulations that call for public disclosure of purchases by any one party of more than five per cent of a public company, it was made known that Murdoch's holding company, the News Corporation, had acquired six and seven-tenths per cent of Warner Communications stock, at a cost of approximately ninety-eight million dollars, and that Murdoch had thus become the biggest single owner of Warner stock.

Interpreting this as the prelude to a takeover attempt, Warner Communications quickly made a deal with Chris-Craft Industries, under which Warner would acquire an interest amounting to forty-two and a half per cent in a Chris-Craft subsidiary, BHC, which owned interests in six commercial television stations in the United States, including one in San Antonio, where Murdoch owns two newspa-

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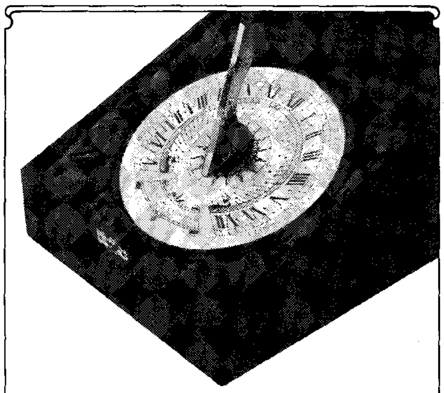

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pers. That agreement put Warner Communications in the commercial broadcasting business as well as the cable business, and federal law prohibits any foreign-owned corporation from possessing more than twenty per cent of an American broadcasting company. In addition, F.C.C. regulations bar newspaper publishers from buying broadcast properties in the same market. Thus, the Warner–Chris-Craft agreement seemed to constitute a serious legal impediment to any direct takeover attempt by Murdoch. Also, as part of its agreement with Warner, Chris-Craft acquired nineteen per cent of Warner stock. Murdoch's defiant response to these maneuverings was to announce formally that he intended to acquire as much as 49.9 per cent of Warner Communications stock, and early last year officers of Murdoch's News Corporation were reported to have said that if Murdoch was successful in acquiring control of Warner Communications—which would include control of the increasingly valuable Warner film library—the result would be the expansion of Murdoch's operation into one huge, integrated international multimedia communications corporation. In March of 1984, however, the F.C.C. rejected an attempt by Murdoch to have the agency overthrow the Warner–Chris-Craft stock swap, and thus effectively thwarted Murdoch's plans for a takeover.

In mid-March, Warner and Murdoch announced a deal in which Murdoch withdrew his attempt to take over Warner, and Warner paid Murdoch a hundred and seventy-two million dollars for his Warner holdings. Murdoch walked away from his effort with a profit of more than forty million dollars, while Warner, in order to finance the repurchase of the stock that Murdoch had bought, obtained a new bank credit line of a hundred million dollars and issued a new convertible preferred stock to raise seventy-two million. Murdoch may have failed in his campaign to obtain control of Warner Communications, but if the strategists at Warner and Chris-Craft had not maneuvered him into the position of potentially running afoul of federal law he might well have succeeded. In any event, the possibility that large numbers of defacto local monopolies under multisystem ownership could have been swept into the maw of the sort of communications super-conglomerate envisioned by Murdoch's people at the time he began buying Warner Amex stock is an indication of how much power it might be feasible to concentrate, over the next few years, in multimedia corporations.

In fact, in March, just a year after Murdoch withdrew from his attempt to take over Warner Amex, he made a dramatic entry into the motion-picture business by buying, for two hundred and fifty million dollars, a fifty-per-cent interest in the Twentieth Century–Fox Film Corporation, which had been having financial difficulties for some time. Until Murdoch bought half of Fox, the studio had been privately owned by Marvin Davis, the wealthy Denver oilman. Then, in May, Murdoch, in a new partnership with Davis, went on to make a deal to buy from Metromedia the largest group of independent commercial TV stations in the country, for more than two billion dollars. The prospect of this acquisition raised speculation that Murdoch—with the film-library and TV-film-production facilities of Twentieth Century–Fox, and satellite-communications facilities acquired for his stalled Skyband direct-broadcast-satellite project—could use the Metromedia stations as the nucleus of a national TV network. The problem of Murdoch's Australian citizenship, which would block his purchase of the American TV stations can be handled easily: Murdoch can simply apply for American citizenship.

This last development came on the heels of the biggest American communications deal yet agreed upon: the three-and-a-half-million-dollar acquisition of ABC, which provides programming for more than two hundred affiliated stations and programs for videocassettes, cable, and subscription television, and owns five TV and twelve radio stations, by Capital Cities Communications, which operates seven TV stations, twelve radio stations, and fifty-four cable-TV systems, and publishes ten daily newspapers and numerous business and specialized publications. As a result of the merger, each organization will divest itself of certain of its assets to conform with federal regulations; accordingly, Capital Cities will divest itself of its entire cable operation. This action will probably contribute to the concentration already taking place in the cable industry, since Capital Cities is the twenty-first-largest cable-system owner in the country, and many of its cable systems will quite probably pass into the control of multisystem cable companies that already are larger than Capital Cities' cable division.

And on top of all this turmoil there is the current attempt by Ted Turner to take over CBS. According to a recent Washington *Post* article by Daniel Schorr, the former senior correspondent for Turner's CNN, in the fall of 1982 CBS (which was then suffering from the failure of the CBS Cable cultural service) was looking for other ways of becoming involved in cable, and its executives had been hearing rumors that Turner, who was taking big operating losses on CNN, seemed ready to consider some sort of merger with one of the big networks. CBS sent Eugene Jankowski, the head of the CBS television network, and William Leonard, the head of CBS News, to Atlanta to talk to Turner about the possibility of CBS's buying a controlling interest in CNN. But Turner refused to sell a controlling interest, and since then his relationship with CBS and the other networks has gone from bad to worse. Turner's takeover offer for CBS, made this April, involved commitments totalling nearly five and a half billion dollars at face value, but much of the offering consisted of high-interest, high-risk bonds. The offer was spurred by the CBS board, but the CBS management has clearly been shaken by the Turner affair, which remains unresolved but which certainly has added greatly to speculation about further concentration in the already concentrated field of communications.

THE tendencies inherent in all these grandiose schemes of consolidation seem far removed from the notions about the pursuit of broadcasting in the public interest, and from the earlier concept of cable television as a means of liberating viewers from the restricted and concentrated structure of commercial broadcasting. Though it is true that cable has provided a number of specialized services not available through commercial channels, the promise of achieving far greater diversity has been countered not only by increased concentration in the cable industry but also by the sort of concentration arising out of conventional TV marketing practices—hustling for the biggest audience at the most efficient cost to advertisers and letting other potential audiences get lost in the shuffle. It is this cost-per-thousand notion of marketing efficiency, rather than the mere availability of a multitude of channels, that remains the supreme consideration in commercial television. It seems that traditional liberal thinking on the subject of telecommunications policy has somehow looked upon the provision or creation of diverse channels as being in itself the prime solution to the problems of concentration in the electronic media, though time after time this notion has turned out to be largely illusory. In radio, to cite just one example, in the nineteen-forties the building of stations using frequency-modulation, or FM, broadcasting, a technology that was invented by Edwin H. Armstrong, was regarded by him and by many other people at the time as making possible the static-free transmission of musical performances and other cultural programs into the home, and also as a way of providing relief from the prevailing mediocrity of network radio programming. And although a few FM stations around the country do provide such services, FM has become for the most part a medium of pop music, commercials, and disc-jockey chatter, just as AM is.

Whatever else may be involved, if the cable industry, with all the supposed technological wonders of the so-called information revolution available to it, is going to have such a free hand in its operations, what it produces will still have to be subject to the caveat issued by Henry David Thoreau, at the beginning of another communications age. "Our inventions are wont to be pretty toys, which distract our attention from serious things," he wrote, nearly a century and a half ago. "They are but improved means to an unimproved end, an end which it was already but too easy to arrive at. . . . We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas; but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate." —THOMAS WHITESIDE

(*This is the third part of a three-part article.*)

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THE ART WORLD

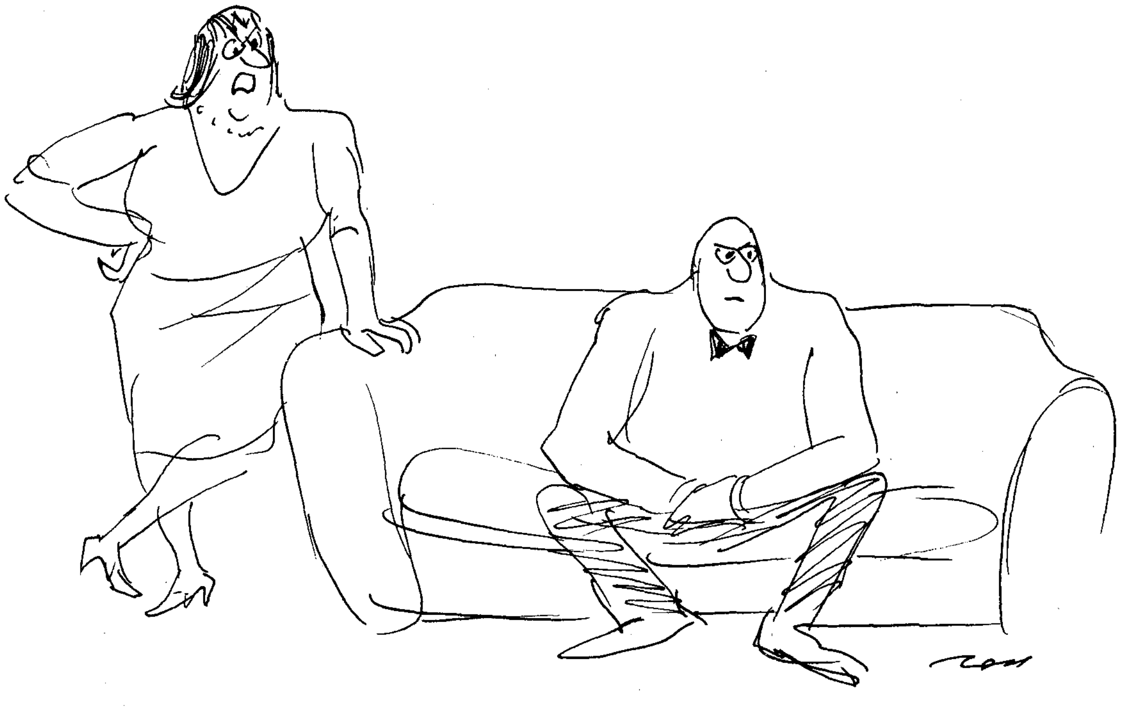
Clear Painting

DONALD SULTAN makes paintings out of tar, vinyl tile, plaster, and other tools of the building trade. Until recently, this struck me as arbitrary and dated. When his images had to do with factories or skyscrapers, it was possible to see a certain metaphorical, truth-to-materials rationale at work. But why keep on using vinyl tile and tar, as Sultan did, to depict tulips, cantaloupe pickers, moonlight on water, or a horse and rider? Was it just an attention-catching gimmick that he'd stuck with too long, like painting on broken plates? Hadn't we seen enough art made from non-art materials? The images in Sultan's pictures were hard to forget nevertheless. Highly simplified, isolated in space, close to abstract, they seemed to follow a curious logic of metamorphosis. The early factories, turned upside down, became tables. The spaces between tall buildings became hats in subsequent pictures. Smokestacks evolved into cigarettes—hard-edged white rectangles with soft-edged smoke rising from them. Eventually, the smokestack form became a tulip. These were austere, clumsy-looking pictures, devoid of any sensuous appeal to the eye, and yet they held the eye and stayed in the mind. They were certainly original. Although a lot of young painters became preoccupied with image-making in the anti-Minimalist ferment of the nineteen-seventies, Sultan's pictures had a deadpan, abrasive, matter-of-fact look that was entirely their own. What now seems apparent is that the austerity of those pictures was a necessary phase in a process of development. In the last two years, Sultan has proved that he can make his uningratiating materials produce paintings whose effects of color, tone, and texture probably could not have been arrived at in any other way.

There were eleven paintings in his show at the Blum Helman Gallery last month, most of them quite large. Several referred tacitly or explicitly to previous art. Three paintings of lemons—monumental, voluptuous lemons with nipplelike protrusions, dazzlingly yellow against black tar—had all come out of a small painting of a lemon by Manet which Sultan saw in the great Manet exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum in 1983. Another Manet, "Moonlight Over Boulogne Harbor," was the model for Sultan's painting called "Harbor," a darkened forest of ships' masts and triangular sails, with patches of silvery-blue moonlight reflected in water. "Poison Nocturne," an even darker picture, had a piece of "Moonlight Over Boulogne Harbor" at the lower right and, across the top, a black structure modelled roughly on a photograph of the Goethals Bridge; its real derivation, though, was the bridge in a Whistler "Nocturne" in the Freer Gallery, in Washington, D.C. "Poison Nocturne" managed to convey something new in art—the sinister look of those industrial waterfronts where the water at night has a scabrous, contaminated sheen. Sultan told me later that the idea for the picture had come from a news story about a sulfuric acid spill in New Jersey.

In "Firemen," foreground figures wearing firemen's gear (they also resemble the seamen in Winslow Homer's "Eight Bells") are silhouetted against orange-yellow flames, whose flickering light is reflected in pools of foreground water. Two other pictures in the show were contrastingly light in tone: "Sailboat," an aerial view looking straight down on a triangular black sail, a tapering white hull with a flash of red at the stern, and a dark-blue sea; and "Flowers and Vase," a magisterial still-life in yellow, purple, green, ochre, and black. The range of tonalities, the complexity of the image, and the authority with which each painting was carried out made it seem that Sultan had moved a long way from the Minimalistic reductiveness of his previous work. For the first time, I thought, his materials did not call attention to themselves; what you saw was the painting. Sudden jumps in an artist's career are rarely as sudden as they appear to be, though, and I found myself wondering what had led Sultan to take the course he had taken in the first place.

I had visited him in 1980, in connection with a piece I was doing on several of the younger artists in New York—a piece in which, as it turned out, Sultan's work was mentioned only peripherally. When I went to see him again, last month, in his loft studio in Tribeca, it quickly became clear that he had not forgotten our first conversation. Several times, he pointed out that I was asking the same question I had asked five years ago, and he remembered what his



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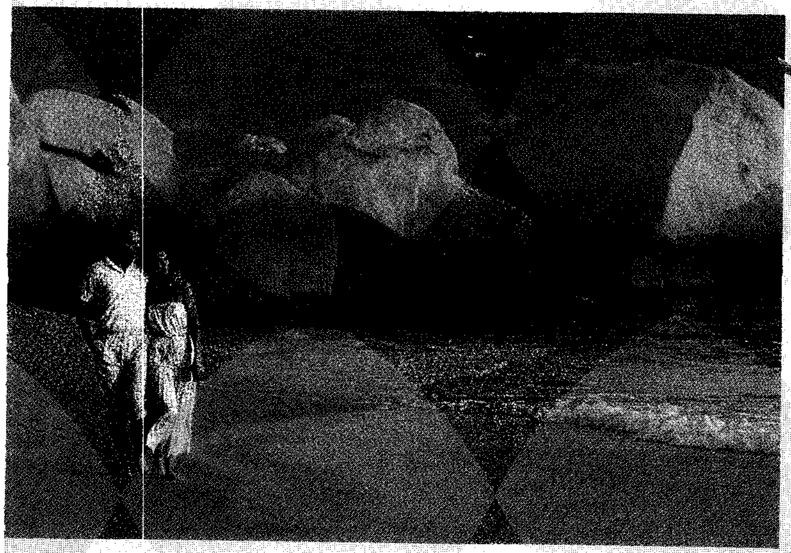

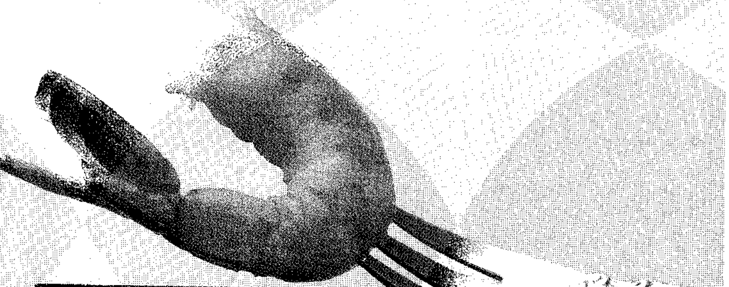

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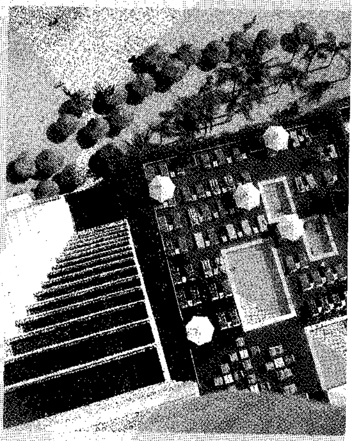

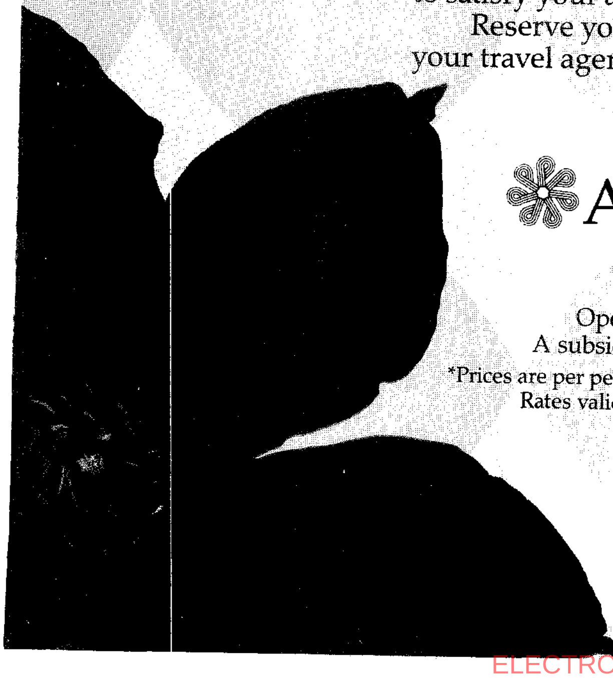

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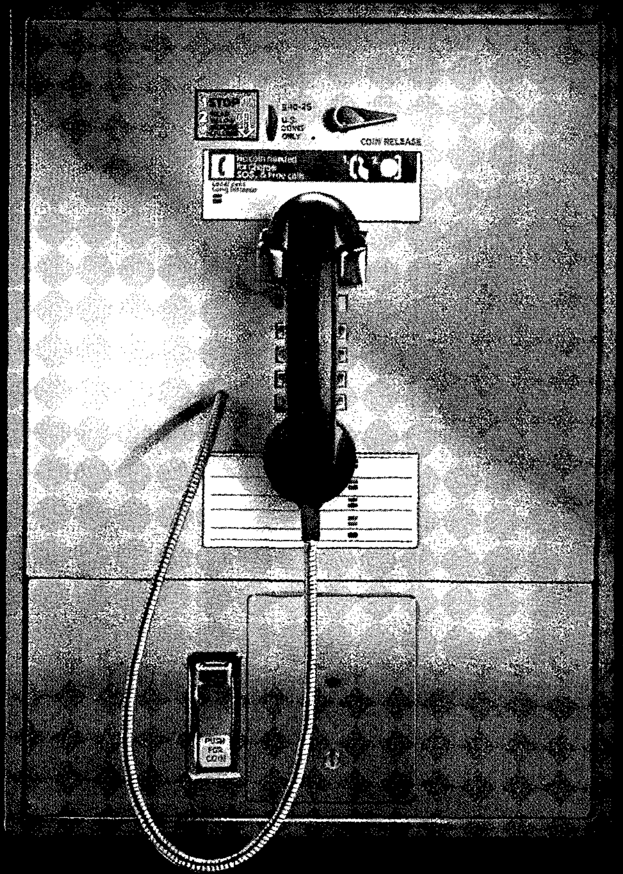
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answer had been. He did not seem to bear any great resentment for my failure to discuss his work in my previous article. He said, in his friendly, self-confident manner, "I figured you'd be back."

SULTAN was born in Asheville, North Carolina, in 1951. His father had wanted to be an artist, but in order to support the family (Donald was the second of four children) he had taken over his own father's automobile-tire-recapping business, which he expanded and made quite profitable. Donald went to a New England boarding school (Wilbraham Academy, in Massachusetts), and came south again to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he planned to major in dramatic arts. He had been interested in theatre since childhood, acting in and designing sets for children's plays in Asheville, and later working in summer stock on Cape Cod. His experience with live theatre made the university drama courses seem tame and dull, however, and at Chapel Hill his interest soon shifted from set designing to painting. After graduating with a B.F.A. degree, in 1973, he spent the next two years at the graduate art school of the Chicago Art Institute, where he began to grapple with the problem of what and how to paint.

This was no small problem in the middle nineteen-seventies. The proliferation of widely divergent styles in the aftermath of Abstract Expressionism gave young artists great freedom, but it also put them under immense pressure to innovate—to come up with a new approach or new subject matter, or to use materials that nobody else had used. Nothing could be taken for granted; nor did it seem acceptable to build on the achievements of the previous generation. Sultan was interested for a while in performance art, which was developing then as a sort of hybrid form, with links to the earlier Happenings, to rock music, and to avant-garde choreography. Most of the artists' performance works he saw disappointed him, though, for much the same reason that the drama department at Chapel Hill had disappointed him: they were not as interesting as real theatre. Minimal art and process art were much in vogue among the students at the Art Institute. Sultan absorbed ideas from both these strains, mostly through his contacts with the other students (there was very little formal teaching, he recalls), but, unlike some of his friends, he felt primarily committed to painting. He was painting with acrylics then, piling layers and layers of thick plastic pigment on canvases laid flat on the floor, in abstract configurations that owed a fair amount to Jackson Pollock. He got tired of that approach after a while, and began pouring acrylic paint onto the canvas to make "lakes" of pigment; while the paint was still wet he would toss all sorts of small objects into it—bottle caps, bits of wood, tiny wooden animals or cars or people, which he had carved in the woodworking shop—and these objects stuck fast as the paint dried. "Debris painting," he called it. Sometimes he painted trompe-l'œil versions of the trapped objects on the dried surface. This got him thinking about images and how to make them work in a contemporary painting.

Sultan also did a lot of drawing. He'd had no instruction in drawing, but he began to teach himself by copying the Old Masters. Using a Rapidograph pen, he tried over and over to reproduce a Rembrandt etching called "The Three Trees." He wanted to understand drawing the way Rembrandt and Hals and Velázquez had understood it, and he wanted somehow to bring this understanding forward into work that took its cue from Pollock. After copying an older work, he would draw over it in his own style, making random images or putting in details from the everyday world. Minimal art's premise was the reduction of the work of art to its essential qualities of line, shape, and color, and Sultan could see the justification for that idea. He read the writings of the critic Clement Greenberg, and he admired the severe geometrically striped paintings of Frank Stella, whose statement that in his own work "only what can be seen there *is* there" had had such a powerful effect on a whole generation of artists. What Sultan wanted to find, though, was a way of working that would allow him to include past art as well as present reality. He had no urge to go back to premodern means—illusionistic realism, for example. It seemed to him that his only option was to work *through* everything—through Old Master painting and drawing, through Pollock, through abstraction and Minimalism and Pop Art and process art and conceptual art—and somehow come out the other side.

Sultan got his M.F.A. degree from the Institute in the spring of 1975, and

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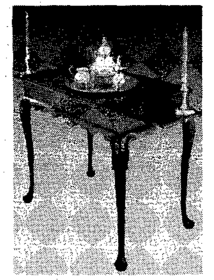

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that fall he moved to New York. He made his living at first by doing freelance construction work (mainly renovating other people's lofts), and painted in his spare time. For a while, he worked as a handyman at the Denise René Gallery, on Fifty-seventh Street. As he was leaving the gallery one day, he noticed some workmen laying linoleum tile in the building's lobby. A heating pipe ran up through the floor, and he paused to see how they were going to deal with that. It was simple, one of the workmen told him; all you did was heat the tile with a blowtorch and it was easy to cut. Soon after that, Sultan volunteered to put down a tile floor in the kitchen of the Denise René Gallery. He ordered a supply of tiles—not linoleum, actually, but vinyl—and went to work. The material appealed to him from the start. He liked its weight and thickness, and the colors it came in, and the random white flecking (like clouds, or whitecaps on water) imprinted by the manufacturer. Previously, he had built up the surface of his paintings with layers and layers of paint, but the tiles—when he took some home to experiment with—achieved this buildup on their own. His first tile painting hangs now on the wall of his studio: a one-foot square of white-flecked black tile glued to Masonite, out of which two separate pieces have been cut, leaving indentations that look something like the hindquarters of an animal, a dog perhaps; the two cutout pieces of tile have been brought together and glued to the picture surface below the indentations, where they make a table of sorts. This was the start of what Sultan calls his "puzzle pictures," in which images suggest or are converted into other images. "I was surprised by all the possibilities that developed," he recalls. He made a lot of small pictures this way, cutting out the tile to form simple, childlike images—boats, pistols, pies, dresses, shoes, and so forth—each of which seemed to come out of the one before. Many of these were in his first New York show, in 1977, at Artists Space (one of the early nonprofit "alternative space" galleries). The paintings were priced at three hundred dollars apiece. Not one was sold.

By this time, he was also working with tar. The compound he'd used to fix the tiles to Masonite, a thick, black tarlike substance called butyl rubber, had turned out to be too weak to hold them when the pictures were hung.

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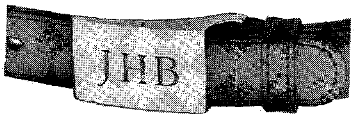

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Sultan switched to contact cement, but he liked the butyl rubber so much that he started making tar drawings on paper with it, using a caulking gun. He also tried covering the surface of the vinyl tiles with a thick layer of the stuff, which he would then cut away to form his images, or else would leave intact as a surface to paint on. His main image at this point was the silhouette of a factory. Making factory pictures out of tile and tar seemed like a nice metaphorical pun, although Sultan never put much emphasis on this sort of truth to materials. He would cut around the tar to make the factory silhouette, with two smokestacks and a flat roof; the exposed sections of green or blue tile, their white flecks darkened by a residue of tar that he left when he washed the surface down with solvent, looked like the smoky sky that you see sometimes in factory neighborhoods. At a certain point, Sultan realized that the smell of butyl rubber and solvent in his loft was just like the smell in his father's tire factory in Asheville. He liked that.

In addition to the factories, Sultan did some large tile paintings with no tar on them—pictures that he thought of as landscapes or seascapes. In these, the painting was divided into two areas through the use of two different shades of tile—blue and gray, for example. What fascinated Sultan about these pictures was that they seemed to suggest spatial depth while remaining unequivocally flat and free of illusionary effects. "I thought I'd begun to break down the whole notion of the flat picture plane," he told me. "Then I put in icebergs, which were easy to do. Once I'd set up a seascape with a horizon line, I'd just take a hammer and smash a hole in the tile. I'd fill in the jagged hole with white plaster—spackling compound—and it became an iceberg." The spatial illusion worked both ways, drawing the eye into the picture and also making the picture appear to project into the room. The forward projection was caused in part by the thickness of the picture's support: vinyl tile glued to Masonite, which was glued to a heavy plywood backing, which, in turn, was attached by steel rods to rectangular stretcher bars—an architectural framework that literally stood out from the wall. The materials he was working with had a lot to do with his search for ways to get more and more elements back into the art of painting.

By 1978, Sultan's work had started to sell. Mary Boone and Miani John-

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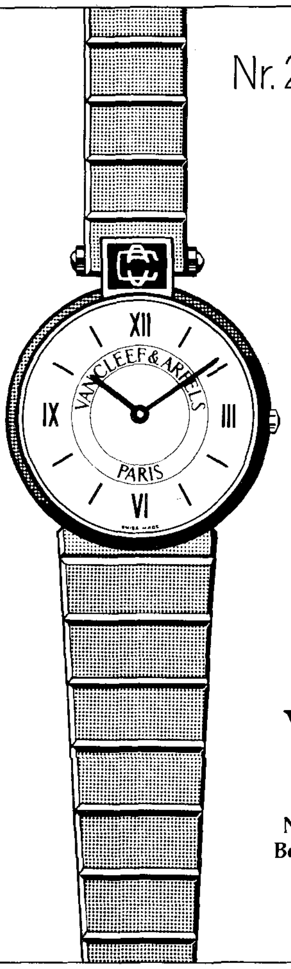

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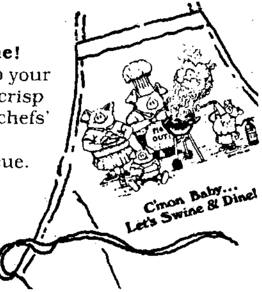
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son (the Willard Gallery's director) both showed it in group exhibitions that year, and the Whitney Museum included two Sultans in its 1979 Biennial. His first one-man gallery show, at the Willard in the winter of 1979, gave a big boost to his reputation, his self-confidence, and his prices, all three of which have been escalating ever since. (In 1980, a large painting by Sultan went for about six thousand dollars; the price was sixty thousand at his latest show, which had sold out before it opened.) Sultan became known as one of the hot new artists of his generation, many of whose brightest talents seemed to be searching, as he was, for new ways to bring recognizable images back into art. The fact that several of these young artists have received a great deal more attention than Sultan has during the last five years, in the art press and along the international-art-world grapevine, is due in part to the relatively new phenomenon—new to the art world, that is—of high-decibel promotion. Neither Sultan's painting nor his personality has lent itself to the kind of superheated attention that has been so helpful and so damaging to Julian Schnabel and a few others. The interior logic of Sultan's work has been hard to follow, and its exterior look, until recently, has resisted an emotional response. Sultan himself has steered clear of the neo-expressionist bandwagon. He does not hang out much with other artists. (His best friend is David Mamet, the playwright.) Although he is by no means deficient in the matter of ego, he lives quietly, with his wife and their four-year-old daughter, in a converted loft not far from his studio, and he has been content so far to show his work at uptown galleries—he moved from the Willard to Blum Helman in 1982—rather than in SoHo, where promoters seem to feel the action is.

"I'D hate to be 'neo'-anything," Sultan said the other day, in his studio. It is a big, clean, uncluttered room, surprisingly neat for an artist's studio, with well-defined work areas, and a stereo set that was playing the score of "Pennies from Heaven." Sultan, who is medium tall and more than medium good-looking, with wavy dark hair, round eyeglasses in thin frames, and a boyish smile, was finishing a large charcoal drawing of three lemons, scrubbing hard with a stub of charcoal to fill in the areas he had outlined. Eric Wolf, one of his studio assistants, was working at the other end of the room, cutting away vinyl tile around the outlines of burning trees in a large painting of a forest fire; he used a blowtorch to heat the tile, then dug it out with a chisel. (Like most successful artists these days, Sultan employs more than one full-time assistant. His principal helper, Katherine Bowling, was away on an errand when I visited the studio.) Several other large paintings were on the walls, in various stages of completion. There was a still-life with three lemons whose shapes had been outlined in white chalk on the tar. An assistant would cut the tar out and fill in the lemon shapes with plaster, which Sultan would then paint yellow. Next to it was a spectacular picture of a factory fire—an image suggested to him by a newspaper clipping. Much of the surface was covered with flames, brushed on lightly in whirling, eddying clouds of yellow latex. The fire image came out of his earlier paintings of smokestacks, which had become smokestacks with flame at the top, and then battleship guns belching flames, and then (via a painting of telephone poles) a flaming cross. In many cases, one image still leads him to another, although he has also done pictures that were sui generis—such as a painting of three migrant workers picking cantaloupes which was in his 1984 show at Blum Helman, or one of a rearing horse and its red-coated rider (in the same show), which was suggested to him by Velázquez' equestrian portrait of the Count Duke Olivares, in the Prado. A series of forest-fire paintings now seems to be giving way to a series of factory fires. He paints the fire with latex, which is water-soluble, and does not dissolve when he washes down the vinyl surface with turpentine. The turpentine does alter the color, though, from bright yellow to an orange-red that has the lurid, fiery glow he wants. When he paints fire, he told me, he makes the sound of crackling flames in his throat, "sort of to keep it moving in my head, to keep the flame moving and the air moving."

Sultan talked freely about the paintings and his ideas for them. His conversation was sometimes hard to follow. There were odd little ellipses in it that left me struggling to catch up. Some artists can be dazzlingly lucid about their work, but I had a feeling that Sultan was anxious not to be pinned down. There was no particular rationale for his using the materials he used—he had just started using them, and one thing led to another, and the possibilities still seemed to him unlimited. The effects of color and texture that he now gets in his still-life paintings are the result of much manual labor. After applying yellow oil paint to the filled-in plaster shape of a lemon, for example, he washes it down again and again with solvent, trying to work some of the tar background into the yellow to give it volume. He wants his lemons to be architectural. He also wants them to be "real statements about weight and volume and sexuality and acidic color—things that turn you off and turn you on at the same time."

While his imagery is far more complex than it used to be, with elements of narrative appearing in "Firemen" and other pictures, each of his paintings still makes one fairly simple point. In that sense, with Sultan as with Stella, what you see is what's there. Sultan does not attach political or environmental tags to paintings of forest fires or dioxin leaks. His point is simply that these things happen and that they can be shown in contemporary art. "I really believe in clear painting," he said. Clear painting in his terms is painting in which there is no doubt about the artist's intention and in which that intention is in harmony with the means used to carry it out. This is precisely what has happened, I think, in Sultan's recent work. He has achieved such a degree of control over his materials that there is no distance between the intention and the finished work. The materials may be crude, but the paintings are not. Crudeness and refinement do not cancel each other out in his work. They exist in tension—a different kind of tension in each painting—and this makes Sultan's current work as exciting to look at as anything I have seen all year. —CALVIN TOMKINS

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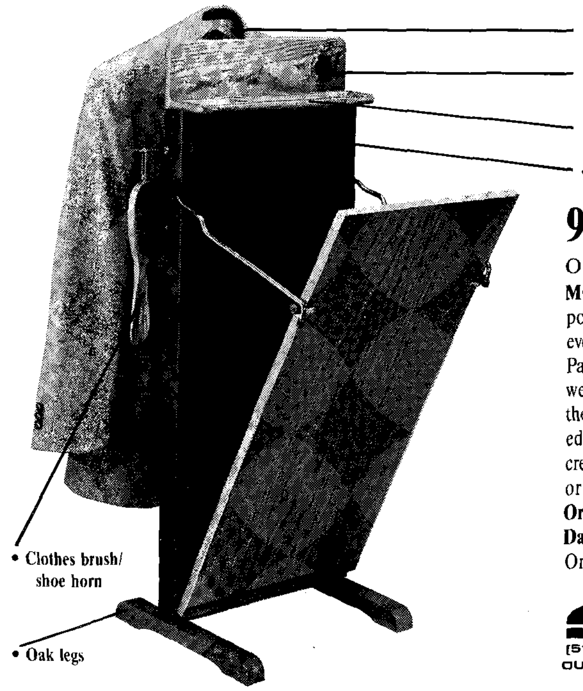
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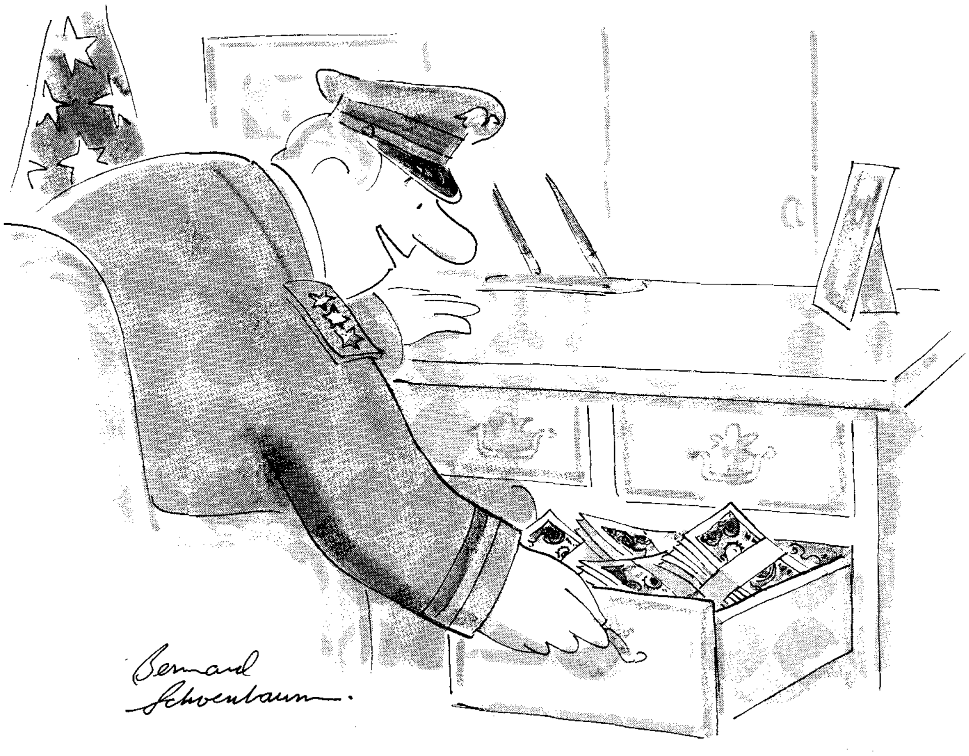
THE THEATRE

Off Broadway

RON HUTCHINSON'S "Rat in the Skull," a British import at the Public, is set in a police station in London, where an Irish Catholic terrorist is being held for questioning by three inquisitors—two English Protestant policemen, Harris and Naylor, and Nelson, of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, who is also a Protestant. The terrorist, Roche, was arrested when a cache of weapons and bombs was found in his quarters, and as the play opens he is seated in a chair, where he remains almost throughout. Above him is projected a series of slides of his face, badly bruised and beaten, with closeups of a bloody eye and then of a bloody ear. (The ear is especially nasty.) The play is a flashback that leads up to the beating, administered (offstage) by Nelson—a beating that results in Roche's eventual release, since it is against English police rules to mess up suspects. Nelson does most of the questioning, in what proves to be a vain attempt to link Roche to various bombings that have taken place in England, and it all boils down to a contest between the two Irishmen—Roche, the silent and implacable suspect, and Nelson, his tormentor, who almost smothers him with rhetoric in the attempt to break him down. "You can't risk letting the rat get in the skull, telling you you're wrong," says Nelson, but the rat of self-doubt is gnawing at both of them. To the English cops, Roche and Nelson are just micks, but to each other they are brothers—fratricidal brothers—and the true enemies are the "eejits" who come along, and will continue to do so, every time the fighting in Ireland might be stopped. Mr. Hutchinson, with immeasurable help from his director, Max Stafford-Clark, presents a bleak picture. Brian Cox, as Nelson, dominates the action; Colum Convey is Roche; and Philip Jackson and Gerard Horan are the English cops. All of them are good, Mr. Horan especially so.

IN "The Return of Herbert Bracewell," at the Chelsea, Milo O'Shea is lightly disguised as a failed actor in his eighties who recites scenes and speeches from all the parts he never got. The time is New Year's Eve, 1909; the scene is Herbert Bracewell's cluttered attic, with scripts piled on shelves and everywhere else. Bracewell's audience (besides us) consists of a ventriloquist's dummy, a leech in a glass of water (I could have skipped the leech), and a stuffed raven presented to him years ago by his wife, who was a successful actress. Between the excerpts are intervals of reminiscence, the most entertaining of them being Bracewell's recollections of his first audition and then his first job, in something called "A Yank in Soho," during which he sings a song and dances with straw hat and cane. His wife, we learn, once left him for a fellow-actor and then returned; I'd been assuming she was dead, until at the end of the first act she entered, in the person of Frances Sternhagen, dressed in a garnet-colored velvet robe and carrying a tray with a teapot and cups and the makings of a dry Martini. The second act is as cluttered as the set, with information and with frantic, feeble attempts at a story, to make us believe we are at a play, not a recital. Too late. Mr. O'Shea's recital is very satisfying, but since he makes no attempt to dim his own blazing talent, we can only conclude, after his readings from Shakespeare and many other dramatists, that all those managers and casting directors were damn fools. The evening ends with an embarrassingly sentimental speech, delivered (more tactfully than it deserves) by Miss Sternhagen, wearing a Lady Teazle hat. Geraldine Fitzgerald directed, and it is easy to see that she and Mr. O'Shea share not only a native land but a sensibility as well.



"*Well, I'll be.*"

THE Ensemble Studio Theatre's "Marathon '85"—twelve new one-act plays, presented four an evening over three evenings—gets off to a fine start with Series A, which I saw last week. David Mamet's "The Frog Prince" is a funny little fairy tale in which the prince and his page talk Mametese to amusing effect, a pure young milkmaid speaks pure English, and an old peasant woman speaks in malevolent rhyme. The performance, with Garrett M. Brown, John Fiedler, Jane Hoffman, and Kristin Griffith, goes well under Peter Maloney's direction. Roger Hedden's "Mariens Kammer" is an adaptation—a brief spinoff, really—of Georg Büchner's "Woyzeck." It is an elusive work and, I regret to say, immediately forgettable. Jane Willis's "Men Without Dates" is about two firefighters—best friends, called Murph and Sal—and is set in a bar on the lower East Side. Murph is about to marry the daughter of the bar's owner, and his pal, who is having severe woman trouble, tries to discourage the match. A third man—one of those dime-a-dozen eccentrics—is the paranoid, bristling bartender. After several incidents, the firemen leave together, but it is clear that the friendship is over. John Turturro is very strong and funny as the hot-tempered fireman maddened by women (and by the bartender). Kevin Bacon is good, too, as the troubled fiancé, and so is James Murtaugh, intermittently behind the bar. Shirley Kaplan directed. Fourth, and best of all, is Richard Greenberg's "Life Under Water." The setting is the Hamptons, where two girls, temporary dropouts from college, are house-minding and babysitting and looking for a good time. A rich middle-aged woman is having an affair with a married man who is also picking up money working at a Manhattan escort service. The woman's young and sensitive son, shocked and miserable at his mother's sexual fling, runs off to the two girls. He picks one of them, who is convalescing from a breakdown, to fall in love with, and she blossoms; then he switches to the other, prettier girl, and the first one wilts. When the season ends, so do the affairs; the son goes home to his mother, the convalescent girl is left abandoned on the beach. The play, social comedy of a high order, has been very well directed by Don Scardino. Larry Bryggman and the playwright are an ideal collaboration, with their shrewd and wicked portrayal of the cheating husband. The other performers—Amanda Plummer, Jill Eikenberry, Alexa Kenin, and Andrew McCarthy—are excellent. Dana Hasson designed the good sets for all four plays, and Martha Hally designed the good costumes.

—EDITH OLIVER

•

THERE'LL ALWAYS BE AN ENGLAND

[*From the London Daily Telegraph*]

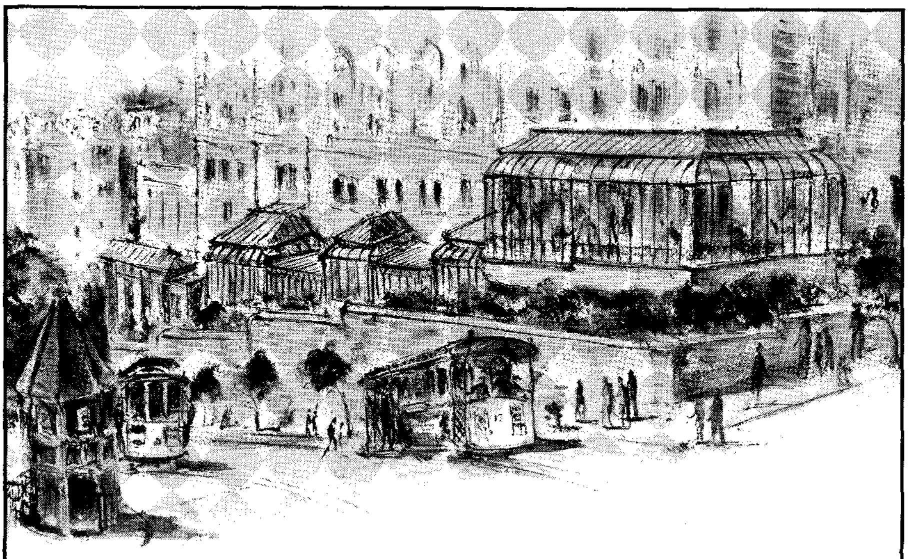
A squad of nature lovers who have been carrying toads across a busy road to their mating grounds in Yorkshire are being urged to hop it.

For an unusually short breeding season means that numbers of toads who have finished mating and successfully recrossed the road on the way to marshes and dykes at Scarborough are being collected by the well-meaning patrol and carried back to Throxanby Mere.

The frustrated toads then have to negotiate the main road yet again with an increased risk of being squashed by traffic.

Now Mr Ian Massey, curator of the town's Wood End natural history museum and the organiser of the scheme, has asked his volunteers, armed with torches and buckets, to desist.

"This year we were taken by surprise when the toads finished mating in only a few days. But now the message has got round and everyone is helping them get home," he said.



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Slaphappy and Not So Happy

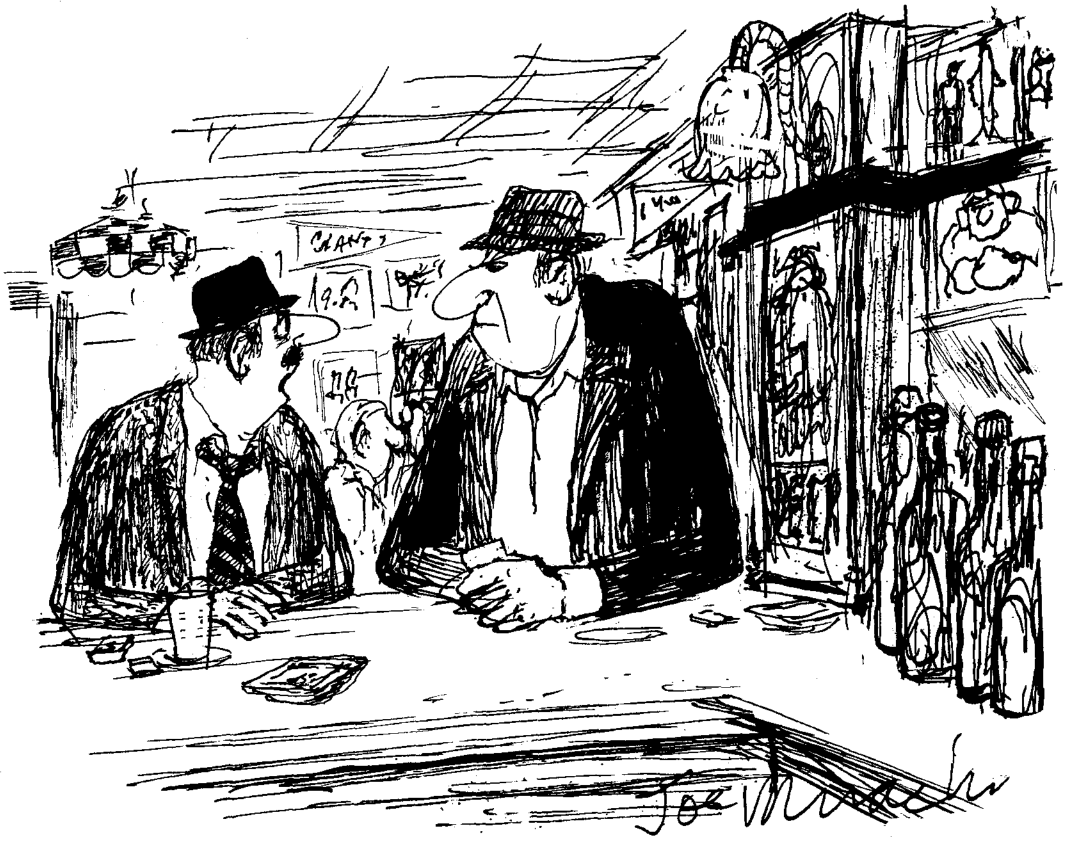
“What Have I Done to Deserve This!” deserves a more inviting title. It’s a generally likable dadaist farce about working-class family life in Madrid’s housing projects—huge block buildings of dinky, cramped apartments put up in the sixties, during Franco’s modernization program. The heroine, Gloria (Carmen Maura), cooks and scrubs and irons for her taxi-driver husband, her two sons, and her crabby old mother-in-law, and goes out to work as a cleaning woman. Gloria drags herself through eighteen-hour days with the help of No Doz and an occasional sniff of glue or detergent. She’s the slightly surreal Mother Courage of this feminist parable. She’s also a housewife version of those mean-spirited, henpecked husbands that W. C. Fields played in the thirties. She’s everybody’s slavey, and she’s sex-starved besides. At the opening of the movie, she is invited into a shower with a naked patron of the martial-arts academy that she cleans; this kendo master is no master of the erotic arts—he leaves her as frustrated as her lug of a husband does. She works off her anger by bashing the air with a club—and that’s a kind of haiku version of the movie, in which Gloria swats her chief oppressor and shakes loose from her family.

Pedro Almodóvar is a bad-boy writer-director—an actor and novelist who also writes comic strips and songs that are takeoffs of other people’s songs. In “What Have I Done to Deserve This!”—his fourth feature film in 35 mm. (he shot an earlier one in Super 8)—he turns the slum buildings into stage sets, and daily life into a series of deadpan skits. He casts a delighted eye at the drug dealing of Gloria’s fourteen-year-old son and the hustling of her twelve-year-old, who seduces his schoolmates’ fathers. Her illiterate husband has a gift for forgery and is involved in a scheme to fake Hitler’s memoirs. His old mother is played by a young actress (Chus Lampreave) who doesn’t bother to use aging makeup. A red-haired little girl who lives in the building is a miniature Carrie, with telekinetic powers. And a ham bone is used as a lethal instrument.

Everything that happens is prepared for (in a slaphappy way), and the director connects all the characters, but there’s no internal logic to the movie. Gloria is a fierce fighting woman one moment and a dishrag the next. We never get the hang of her attitudes: why is she so sweetly concerned about the little red-haired girl when she’s relieved to be rid of her own kids? When a homosexual dentist offers to “adopt” her younger son, she sells the kid and buys herself a curling iron. Yet after we’ve chuckled at how self-centered everybody is—except the pretty prostitute (Verónica Forqué), who is the building’s resident humanitarian—there are last-minute indications that Gloria is a loving mother and her sons are basically good kids who worry about her. (It’s too upbeat a development when the dope-dealer boy heads back to farm country.) The movie has something of the hit-or-miss, bombastic quality of a Lina Wertmüller picture, but it’s a lot easier to take. It isn’t gummed up with “art.”

Almodóvar is an underground-theatre clown. He may not know how to make anything stay with you—he may not even care to. He just likes to put on a show. Some of the vignettes might be comedy classics if their timing weren’t so sloppy. The dentist’s proposition, for example—his indication that, with his VCR and Sony stereo, he can give the boy the advantages that the boy’s parents can’t—has no payoff. And the actor who plays the dentist is too frenzied to let the proposition scene get its laughs. With the main exceptions of Carmen Maura’s Gloria and her older boy (Juan Martínez) and the prostitute, the roles are performed rather crudely and perfunctorily. But, at least, the acting is pleasantly dry; very little is labored, or even stressed.

The best things in the movie aren’t attached to its characters; they’re interludes—a parody of a coffee commercial, pseudo-Kurt Weill songs. And I liked the casual effrontery of Almodóvar’s presenting the young-faced grandmother—it gives the movie an Off-Off Broadway informality. The picture comes closest to true dadaist slap-



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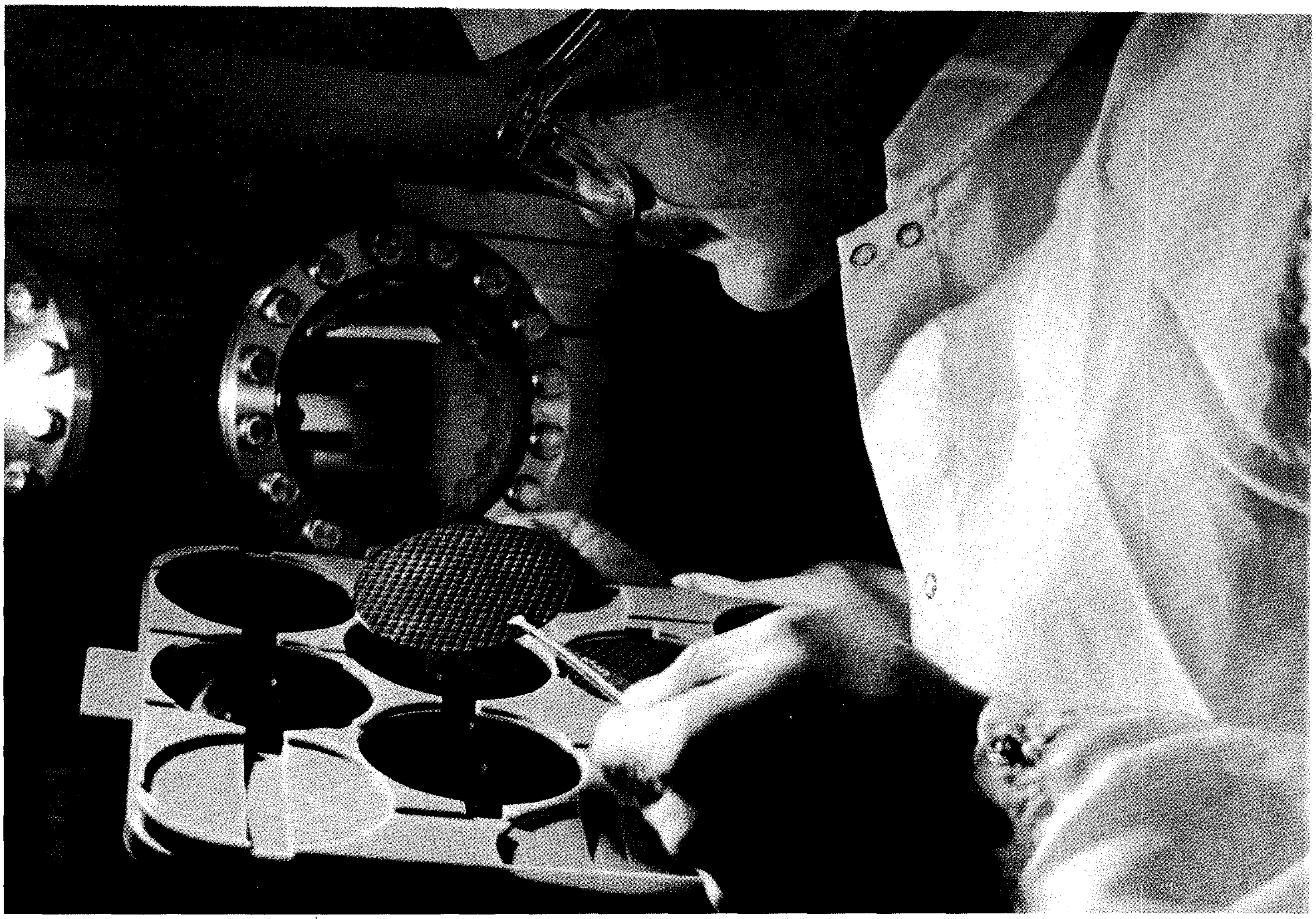

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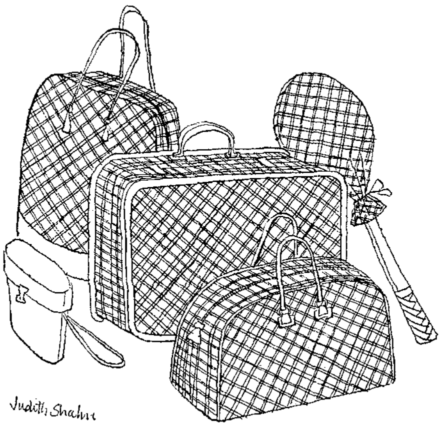
When the slum apartment buildings are seen from the outside, their checkerboard patterns fill the screen. The buildings are like squared-off anthills—they're dizzying backdrops to the scenes shot in the streets. No doubt it was economy that dictated the size of the rooms in these bughouses, yet when you see the people crowded inside them with their big beds and chests and chairs you feel they've been made fools of—deliberately, perversely. Almodóvar—and this is his link to Brecht and Weill—makes these breeding grounds of vice seem macabre and frolicsome. But he's much more flip than they were. Gloria's impulses go every which way, and you'll probably never see a woozier treatment of the breakdown of the family and the decay of the society. "What Have I Done to Deserve This!" is like a comic-strip version of "The Threepenny Opera." Its not adding up is, maybe, what's tickling about it.

THE Swiss picture "Dangerous Moves," which took the 1984 Academy Award for Best Foreign-Language Film, is loosely based on the celebrated Karpov-Korchnoi chess games. It's about a world-championship match held in Geneva between the longtime titleholder, Liebskind (Michel Piccoli), a courtly and cagey gray-bearded Russian Jew from the Soviet Union, and his former pupil, the challenger, Fromm (Alexander Arbatt), a young Lithuanian who defected from the Soviet Union and now lives in France. I was eager to see how the filmmakers—the writer-director Richard Dembo and the cinematographer Raoul Coutard—would handle the intellectual gamesmanship of chess. Well, they don't. The winner or loser of each day's proceedings is determined by what happens in the players' lives in the days between the games, or by the tricks that they and their aides use to spook the opposition during the games themselves. The movie shows the efforts of Liebskind's earnest, attentive wife (Leslie Caron) to keep him calm, because his heart is bad, but he's seething with all kinds of rage, sparked by the Soviet officials' refusal to let the only cardiologist he trusts accompany him to Switzerland. (The doctor's sons are in Israel, and the officials feared he might try to join them.) And the movie shows the anxieties of the high-strung, somewhat paranoid Fromm, who doesn't know what's happening to his wife (Liv Ullmann), back in Moscow. Both contestants are being manipulated by the Soviet bureaucracy.

Dembo might say that if he didn't present these psychological stresses and maneuvers there'd be nothing to photograph. But why pick chess if you're going to negate what's fascinating about it—the mental concentration it requires? By showing us two grand masters who are at the mercy of their emotions, Dembo banalizes chess and turns the movie into anti-Soviet psychodrama. And though the film proceeds systematically, game by game, we're not told how many games must be won, so we don't have any peg for suspense or excitement.

At first, Fromm's tempestuousness and the way he angers Liebskind, by arriving late for the sessions without the slightest show of contrition, puts us in an expectant mood; the handsome, blond Arbatt, who resembles Nureyev, and is, in fact, a Russian defector (an actor who found asylum in France), gives some promise of fireworks to come. Instead, we get poor Liv, who has been sent from Moscow to Geneva to upset her husband, staring at him watery-eyed as she delivers lines like "They destroyed me so that I would destroy you." Even Piccoli, who gives a cunning, authoritative performance, has no chance to wing past the pedantry of the conception. Each time he smokes a cigarette or scratches his fingers nervously, Dembo all but clangs a fire bell. Yes, we see that Liebskind is feeling old and mortal, that he's feeling his powers slip away. But is there nothing specific to the guy, or to his wife, who serves him with standard devotion? After a while, we're not even waiting to see who will win—we're just waiting to see how soon Liebskind's heart will give out.



Only two images stayed with me: the wonderful greenish water as Liebskind's boat crosses the lake from his bungalow to the exhibition hall where the games are played, and the surprise slapstick moment when the hypnotist that Liebskind's aides have planted in the audience to distract Fromm and the mime that Fromm's aides have planted to distract Liebskind file out of the hall at the same time and their eyes meet. "Dangerous Moves" didn't need to cave in on itself so lugubriously. A chess movie might be high comedy if all kinds of irrationality broke loose in the players' lives and then they sat down to their matches with their minds clicking like computers (but better).

THE James Bond series has had its bummers, but nothing before in the class of "A View to a Kill." You go to a Bond picture expecting some style or, at least, some flash, some lift; you don't expect the dumb police-car crashes you get here. You do see some ingenious daredevil feats, but they're crowded together and, the way they're set up, they don't give you the irresponsible, giddy tingle you're hoping for. The movie is set mostly in Chantilly, Paris, and San Francisco, and it's full of bodies and vehicles diving, exploding, going up in flames. Christopher Walken is the chief villain; the ultra-blond psychopathic product of a Nazi doctor's experiments, he mows people down casually, his expression jaded. And the director, John Glen, stages the slaughter scenes so apathetically that the picture itself seems dissociated. (I don't think I've ever seen another movie in which race horses were mistreated and the director failed to work up any indignation. If Glen has any emotions about what he puts on the screen, he keeps them to himself.)

All that keeps "A View to a Kill" going is that it needs to reach a certain heft to fit into the series. As the villainess, Grace Jones, of the flat-top haircut and the stylized look of African sculpture, is indifferently good-humored the way Jane Russell used to be, and much too flaccid, and as the blond heroine Tanya Roberts (who has a disconcerting resemblance to Isabelle Adjani) is totally lacking in intensity—she goes from one life-threatening situation to another looking vaguely put out. About the most that can be said for Roger Moore, in his seventh go-round as Bond, is that he keeps his nose to the grindstone, permitting himself no expression except a faint bemusement. It used to be that we could count on Bond to deliver a few zingers, but this time the script (by Richard Maibaum and Michael G. Wilson) barely manages a little facetiousness. The film does come up with one visual zinger: in the small role of Jenny Flex, a stunning young model named Alison Doody comes up with a curvy walk that's like sex on wheels.

"STICK"—adapted from an Elmore Leonard novel, and set in and around Miami—shows its director and star Burt Reynolds at a low ebb. Whether he's ill or just drained, the fun has gone out of his acting; he seems unsure of himself, and his voice is hoarse and on the verge of fading away. He tries to make his general depressiveness work in terms of the character, but this Stick—an ethical tough guy with refined tastes—has no consistency, and the film is cursed with the philosophical insights that came to him during the seven years he just spent in the slammer. "Stick" has its lowest point in a scene with a cruelly suave gang leader who lives in an apartment that looks like Presley's Graceland. Wanting to impress Stick, this gangster prepares to punish the young owner of a bodega who hasn't paid enough protection money. The grocer sits in helpless terror as the gangster, using a pair of tongs, takes a scorpion from a tank and places it on his arm. Slowly, it crawls toward his face: Will Stick find a way to save him or will he be stung? There is a cut, and we never find out.

The picture also has a high point. An actor named Dar Robinson—he's famous as a stuntman—plays an albino killer with a sinister half smile and blurry yellow eyes. He's always on the verge of doing something memorably baroque, and finally he does—he falls off the balcony of a high building, and while plunging to his death he keeps firing his revolver all the long way down. Except for that, the only thing that makes "Stick" worth mention is that George Segal, in the broadly written role of a cigar-chomping millionaire who likes to pal around with hoods, is rip-roaringly manic. Some of his old joy in acting comes out, and each time he appears he gives the movie a shot of energy. As he plays the part, the millionaire is carried away by the pure ecstasy of being rich.

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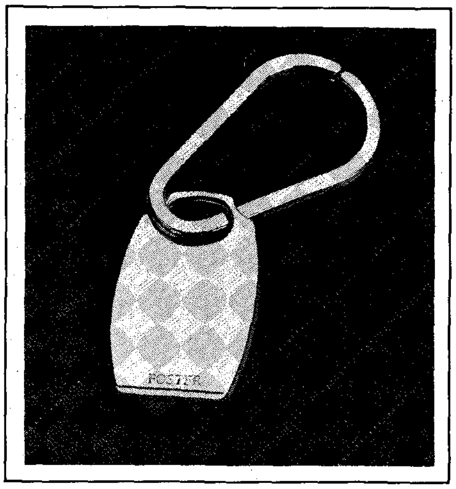

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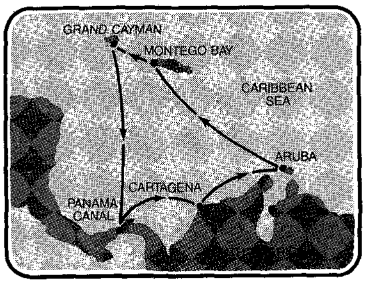

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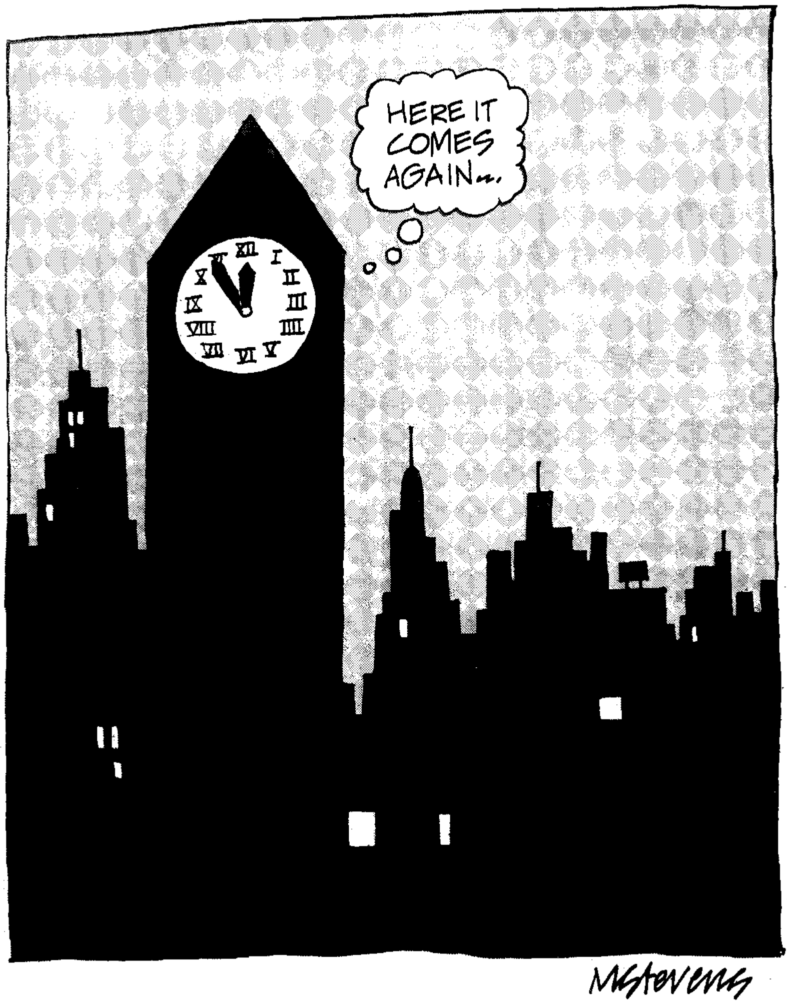
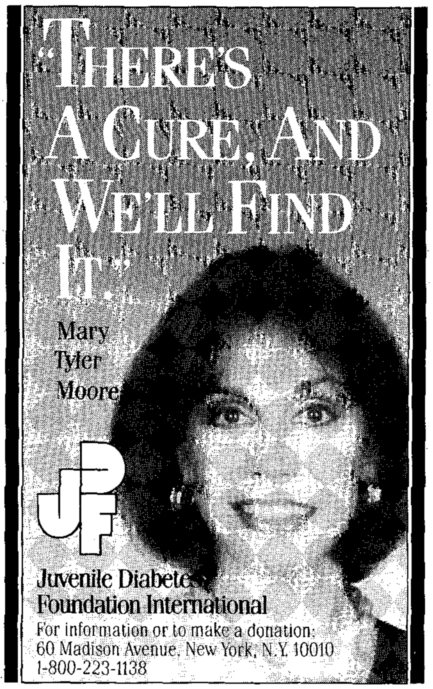
A Dubious Battle

"SON OF THE MORNING STAR," by Evan S. Connell (North Point; $20), tells the story of George Armstrong Custer's defeat beside the Little Bighorn River in the Territory of Montana on June 25, 1876. Custer and five companies of his command, the United States Seventh Cavalry—some two hundred and sixty-five men in all—were killed by a much larger number of Sioux and Cheyenne. The book is not long, but it feels immense—indeed, monumental. Working with an economy that never calls attention to itself, Mr. Connell narrates the Army's campaign against the Indians of the northern plains in the Centennial year; he recounts the careers of Custer, his comrades in arms, and the Indian leaders they fought; and he portrays the frontier in the decades after the Civil War. His range of research and reference is broad (he tells us, for instance, that the first written reference to scalping occurs in Herodotus, who attributed the practice to the Parthians), and his account encompasses a considerable amount of American history. Many of those who figure in the tale have passed into legend, among them Buffalo Bill Cody, Wild Bill Hickok, Calamity Jane, the reporter Henry M. Stanley (who covered the Indian wars before he went to Africa to seek Dr. Livingstone), and the great Indian leaders Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, Gall, and Rain in the Face. What seems to have dropped out of legend or folk memory is the cosmopolitanism of this frontier. There were many frontiers after Europeans came to the Americas. They differed in landscape and period, and in the purposes of the immigrants and the cultures of the Indian tribes they encountered. But the frontier Custer knew, the Great Plains in the years after the Civil War, has become the quintessential American frontier, and it is American in that it was multiracial—Indians, black soldiers and white, and even a scout who was half Polynesian—and international. An Old Etonian served with Custer, along with survivors of the struggle for Italian unification: one of Garibaldi's drummer boys; a commander of the papal forces that defended Rome in 1860; and an accomplice of Felice Orsini (who was guillotined for throwing a bomb at Napoleon III in 1858). In telling us about Sitting Bull, Mr. Connell quotes the journals of Baron de Trobriand, a French nobleman who had married an American, volunteered to fight for the Union, and then found himself stuck in the regular Army, assigned to the Dakota Territory. Custer's regimental band was conducted by an Italian and was made up mainly of Germans; it sent the Seventh Cavalry off to battle with an Irish march.



Mr. Connell does not go out of his way to stress the cosmopolitanism of the frontier; he simply records it. Indeed, he is never overemphatic or argumentative. He points out that in the nineteenth century Custer was an idol and the Indians were ogres, but in the twentieth century they have exchanged roles. And he quotes Paul Hutton, a contributor to *The Western Historical Quarterly* in 1976: "The only constant factor in this reversed legend is a remarkable disregard for historical fact." Mr. Connell's fidelity to fact and his balance in reporting it are anything but dry. He is less chatty here than in his earlier historical essay "The Long Desire;" his style more closely resembles that of his classic novels about Mr. and Mrs. Bridge of Kansas City. He shows instead of merely telling. He does not, for example, assert that Americans found Custer's defeat unimaginable; he lets us discover that it was unimaginable by opening his book with a description of scouting parties from the command of Custer's superior, General Alfred Terry. Pursuing a plan agreed on at the start of the campaign, Terry's troops were on their way to join Custer. The scouts reported unmistakable signs of Custer's disaster, yet Terry's men could not accept them. Similarly, the commanders of two units of Custer's force which had fled to a hill and been besieged by Indians for two days were amazed when Terry's soldiers joined them; they still expected to be rescued by Custer. In describing the Seventh Cavalry's ordeal, and throughout the book, Mr. Connell appeals to our senses. He notes that on the march to the Little Bighorn, through magnificent scenery, the air was scented by wildflowers; and that in the late afternoon of the twenty-fifth the beleaguered units realized when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they heard a change in the sound of the incoming projectiles that the Indians had switched from bows and arrows to rifles. (Even that frightening change did not alert them to the possibility that Custer had lost and the Indians were using Army weapons.) When, finally, the defeat was recognized, the response of the civilian population magnified the Army's shock and its desire for revenge. The American response foreshadowed that of the English in 1885 when they learned that General Gordon and his garrison had been wiped out at Khartoum. Like Custer, Gordon was regarded as a hero and martyr, whose death had to be punished. This nineteenth-century reaction differs from the more stolid or realistic attitude of the Romans to the defeat of their General Varus, who lost his life and three legions to a German ambush in 9 A.D.; Roman historians describe him as unwary or unfortunate but do not, as far as I can discover, idealize their loser.

Mr. Connell's balance persuades me that my twentieth-century dislike of Custer as an irresponsible leader has been too simple. Custer seems to embody a problem we find wherever there is management or administration—nowadays, practically everywhere. He was a brilliant subordinate promoted to a job he could not handle. His tirelessness, fearlessness, and aggressiveness had won victory after victory in the Civil War, and his military patron, General Philip Sheridan, consistently supported the young West Pointer and saw to it that he was employed in the postwar period. However, Custer's élan needed supervision; at the Little Bighorn, unfortunately, he was on his own. His flamboyance was magnetic in his period. If it is less so now, I suppose we have to imagine the past in its own terms. Custer felt a need to decorate or bedizen everyday life, and Mr. Connell describes the irritation in the Army over his fancy baggage and elaborate quarters. But photographs of Custer's rooms at Fort Lincoln which appear in "Americans at Home," by Harold L. Peterson (1971)—showing a piano, a guitar, Rogers Groups, and house plants—suggest aspiration as much as ostentation. Mr. Connell's portrait displays Custer's gifts, including a talent for writing, and conveys his ability to inspire. Yet Custer's rash courage argues against him today. He was not supposed to fight the Indians; he led only one element of a three-pronged Army movement whose purpose was to find the Indian tribes and persuade them—by force if necessary—to move to a reservation, and he was to wait for the other forces before resorting to battle. He knew that there were a great many more Indians than had been estimated, and the suspicion—muted at the time, rooted since—has been that he decided to chance a daredevil attack, gambling that his small force could catch the Indians off guard or off balance and the glory of victory would be his alone.

In betting on nerve to conquer numbers, Custer took no account of the lives of his men, who are, I think, the only people in the story for whom one feels unqualified sympathy. Mr. Connell cites a variety of statistics—between 1867 and 1891 about a third of all American Army recruits deserted, and the suicide rate was three times that of the British Army—and fleshes them out with descriptions of the sufferings of enlisted men on the frontier. Endemic corruption created failures of supply of food, weapons, and ammunition. The men received rudimentary military training and were subject to discipline whose cruelty often violated the military code. Custer and many other commanders applied their imagination not to making Army life more tolerable but to making punishments more terrible. Civilians and soldiers apparently thought of Army service as a job, and a rotten one. American soldiers typically dressed down for combat. In hot weather, they took off their jackets and wore whatever was comfortable—straw hats were popular. Even Custer cut his long hair before this campaign. The Americans' utilitarian approach to battle was the antithesis of the Indians': they dressed up. Each warrior designed his own costume, regalia, and paint, and usually made his own weapons. The Indian force, in contrast to the American, was an assembly not of the unemployed and unfortunate but of men for whom fighting was the purpose of life.

In writing about the Indians, Mr. Connell betrays none of the contemporary sentimentality that attempts to persuade us of the attractions of Stone Age culture or to endow the Plains tribes with virtues they themselves would not have claimed, such as a devotion to conservation. Nostalgia for warrior societies runs through all Western literature, possibly because all our peoples—Israelites, Hellenes, Romans, Celts, Germans—entered history as warring tribes. It is a relief that the book's even voice reminds us that this kind of primitive society was nasty and narrow. By the eighteen-seventies, civilized Westerners had forgotten that there was scarcely an Indian atrocity or barbarism that their own remote ancestors had not committed, and European nationalists were glorifying their barbarian forebears. The nineteenth century depended heavily on "scientific" racism, and decided Indians were inferior. Thus it contrived to overlook what we can grasp despite the barrier of culture: that several of the Indian leaders were superior human beings, wise and balanced as well as forceful.

Custer's defeat was the beginning of the end for the Indians of the northern plains; the event aroused the public and the Army to a final job of "pacification" of the frontier. It also evoked a good many efforts to commemorate or depict the tragedy, including bad poems by Whitman and Longfellow. "Son of the Morning Star" is probably the first successful work of art about Custer's Last Stand. It is fascinating, pathetic, profound, and unsettling; it implicitly questions our judgments and values. I recognize in myself two modes of feeling that date from the eighteenth century and make me grieve. One is humanitarianism and the other a love of nature: the first quarrels with the realities of history, the second struggles against one of them—that most famous battles, from Marathon on, have been fought in beautiful landscapes in fine weather. More seriously, the book makes me wonder whether we should continue to exalt attempting the impossible. Do we not need to put more intellectual and educational effort into the study of prudence, and into distinguishing, as Custer apparently could not, between prudence and cowardice or slackness? Then, too, the history of the frontier is troubling because we approve the end and regret the means. Few would prefer that the Americas had remained outdoor museums of primitive cultures, but the methods by which the continents were civilized—force,

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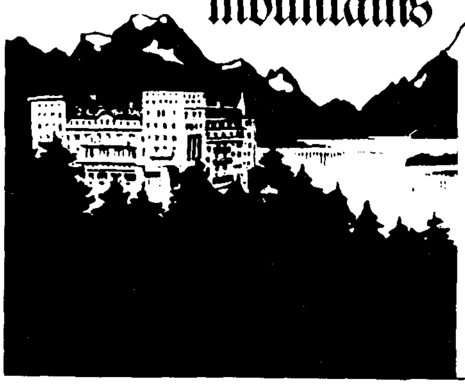
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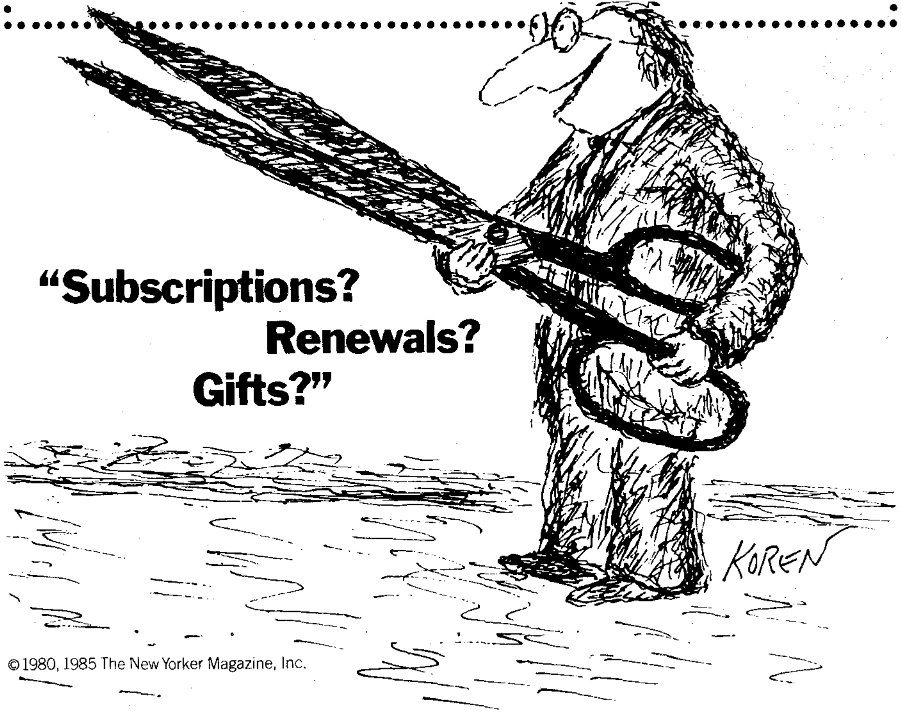
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fraud, and ineffectual charity—were not civil. Every confrontation between history and prehistory—the substance of this book—opens a range of melancholy reflections. The most melancholy, perhaps, is that civilization fulfills its promises so incompletely, so sluggishly. —NAOMI BLIVEN

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

THE DITTO LIST, by Stephen Greenleaf (Villard; $16.95). D. T. Jones, the central figure in Mr. Greenleaf's new novel, is not an unfamiliar character in modern American fiction. He is in his late forties; he is divorced, with an adored and adorable young daughter; he drinks too much and eats irregularly; he is careless in dress and in housekeeping; he is chronically in debt; and (in this manifestation) he is a lawyer—a divorce lawyer, in solo and not very lucrative practice. He is also a man of conscience, sensibility, and high intelligence. It must be quickly added that Mr. Greenleaf seems entirely unaware that his Jones is something of a cliché, and it is a good measure of his skill and self-assurance that he presents him as an original. It must be further added that the reader happily accepts this assessment, and, having accepted it, gives himself up to a joyful interval of serious fun with the law (Mr. Greenleaf is a lawyer), with the human condition, and with the foolisher fancies of our time. The title refers to the nature of Jones' usual cases: Stone v. Stone, Finders v. Finders, etc.

SMALL WORLD, by David Lodge (Macmillan; $15.95). "An Academic Romance," as the subtitle says, about a postmodern young scholar-errant named Persse, whose Grail is a girl. His quest is punctuated by symposia—the jet-age version of medieval tourneys—where she keeps evanescing, and where his worldlier colleagues, backscratchers and backstabbers alike, prove to be less confident of the influence of Shakespeare on T. S. Eliot (Persse's specialty) than of the influence of T. S. Eliot on Shakespeare. Self-serving lectures are their weapons as they joust for a sinecure called the UNESCO Chair of Literary Criticism, to be awarded by a withered doyen called Kingfisher. Like Camelot, the global campus is peopled by an élite of lovelorn misfits—hence the compound coincidences that this witty story's title suggests. Any reader who enjoys the opening pages, as Mr. Lodge toys with two English poets' appraisals of April in England, will probably need no footnotes to appreciate in subsequent pages the allusions to the footnotes to "The Waste Land."

THE CALL, by John Hersey (Knopf; $19.95). This majestic novel tells of the life of an American missionary to China—an upstate New Yorker named David Treadup, who was born in 1878, experienced conversion as a college student at Syracuse, and heeded the missionary call of an evangelist associated with the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, an intercollegiate group sponsored by the Y.M.C.A. When, in 1905, Treadup arrives in China as a Y.M.C.A. worker, he finds that the effort to transplant Christianity takes on undreamed-of complexities and ambiguities. Treadup may be described as a victim of Chinese history, for his passionate dedication to China and to educating the Chinese is rewarded by rejection and, at last, ejection by the Communists. Mr. Hersey conveys the agonies of China in the twentieth century and the vast changes within the Western culture that the missionaries imparted. He occasionally introduces genuine historical figures, and he makes them as credible as his fictional ones. The novel is not argumentative but philosophical or reflective. It suggests the tragedy that, in retrospect, seems the inescapable outcome of this meeting between the Protestant West and the troubled East, but at the same time it suggests the inherently non-tragic nature of the Christian effort: not all the missionaries' seeds fell on stony ground. Mr. Hersey immerses the reader in an alien world that projects a strange portrait of our own.

GENERAL

VICTORY IN EUROPE: D-DAY TO V-E DAY, text by Max Hastings, photographs by George Stevens (Little, Brown; $25). In 1944, General Eisenhower asked the movie director George Stevens to accompany the Allied armies on the imminent invasion of Europe and make a motion-picture record of the campaign. That record, in black-and-white, is one of the most important of the Second World War. While he was

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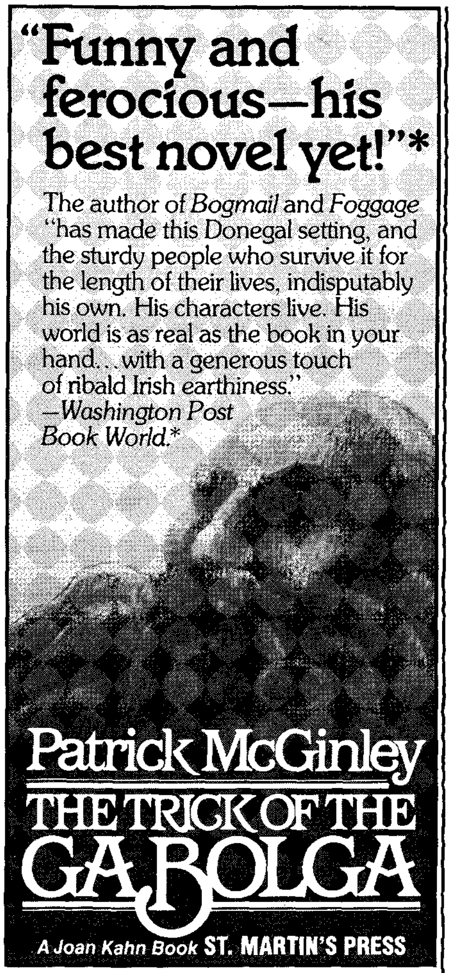
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at it, Stevens was making another record for himself, with a 16-mm. camera and in color—a kind of pictorial diary of his and his film unit's wartime adventures. A selection of those photographs—some two hundred of them—is found in this stunning book. We know the Second World War from newsreels made at the time and documentaries made afterward in the relative monotone of black-and-white photography, so the lively color of these prints comes almost as a shock. De Gaulle, Patton, a Free French girl with a machine gun and strong pink thighs, wild cheering crowds in the liberated cities, long files of German prisoners of war, Soviet and American soldiers on the Elbe's bank, and the faces of the dead—all these suddenly seem more real, more immediate, even after nearly half a century.

NOTE: "Funny Money," Mark Singer's report on the collapse of the Penn Square Bank, of Oklahoma City, has been published by Knopf ($15.95). All the contents originally appeared in *The New Yorker*. . . . "In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity," by Daniel J. Kevles, has also been published by Knopf ($22.95). Most of the contents first appeared here.

•

BLOCK THOSE METAPHORS!

[*From the Austin* (*Texas*) *American-Statesman*]

"If somehow we lose control on the Senate floor and amendment after amendment after amendment is offered and a turkey shoot begins to unfold and the package begins to unwind, it will be nigh impossible to pick up Humpty Dumpty off the floor and reassemble the package," Stockman said Friday.

Sen. Dan Quayle, a strong backer of the plan, said he had never seen such a lack of consensus. "It's going to be a demolition derby out there on the floor of the Senate, and I feel the whole thing is going to unravel," the Indiana Republican said.

•

For summer guests unacquainted with the indestructible wood tick, my son, Eric, has come up with the perfect solution.

He calls it Ticks on Tape. Upon arrival, each summer visitor receives a roll of adhesive tape. When a tick appears, the guest simply presses a piece of tape to its back. This not only immobilizes the tiny beastie, but also immortalizes him as he is instantly ready for being mounted in your guest's scrapbook entitled Vineyard Memories.

SUSAN BERLIN

—Letter in the Edgartown (*Mass.*) *Vineyard Gazette.*

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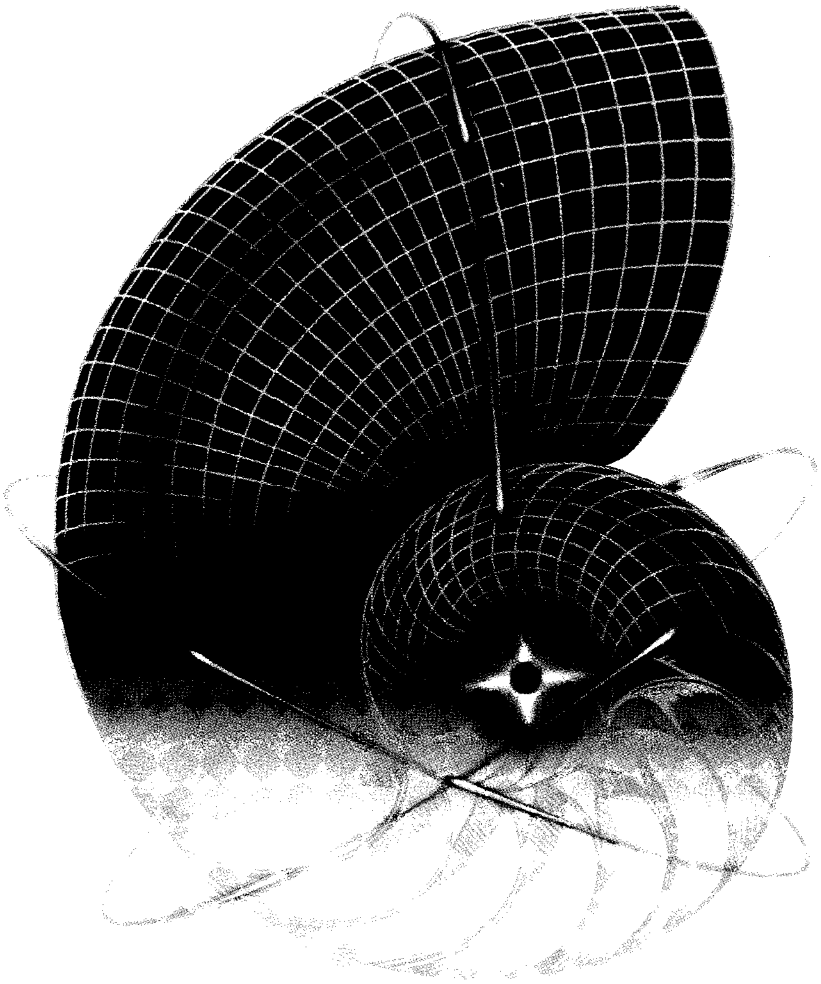

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